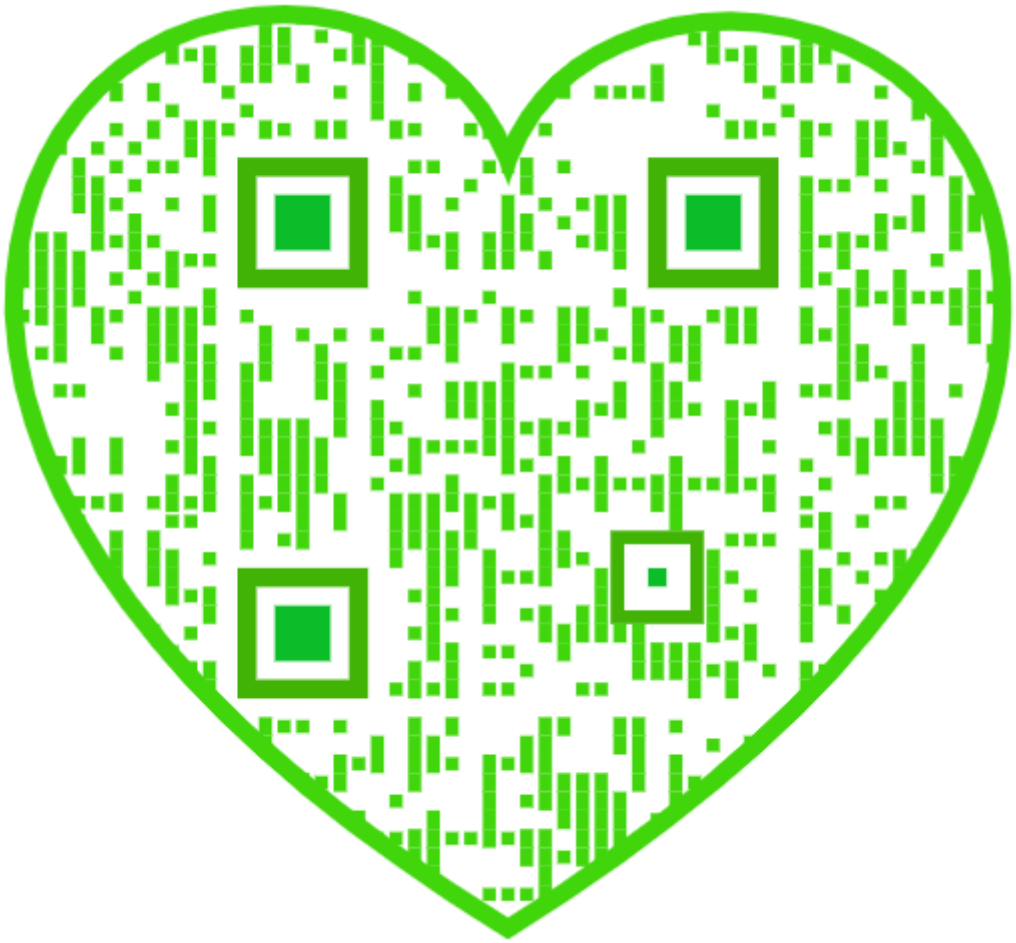
THE BOY SCOUTS BOOK OF STORIES



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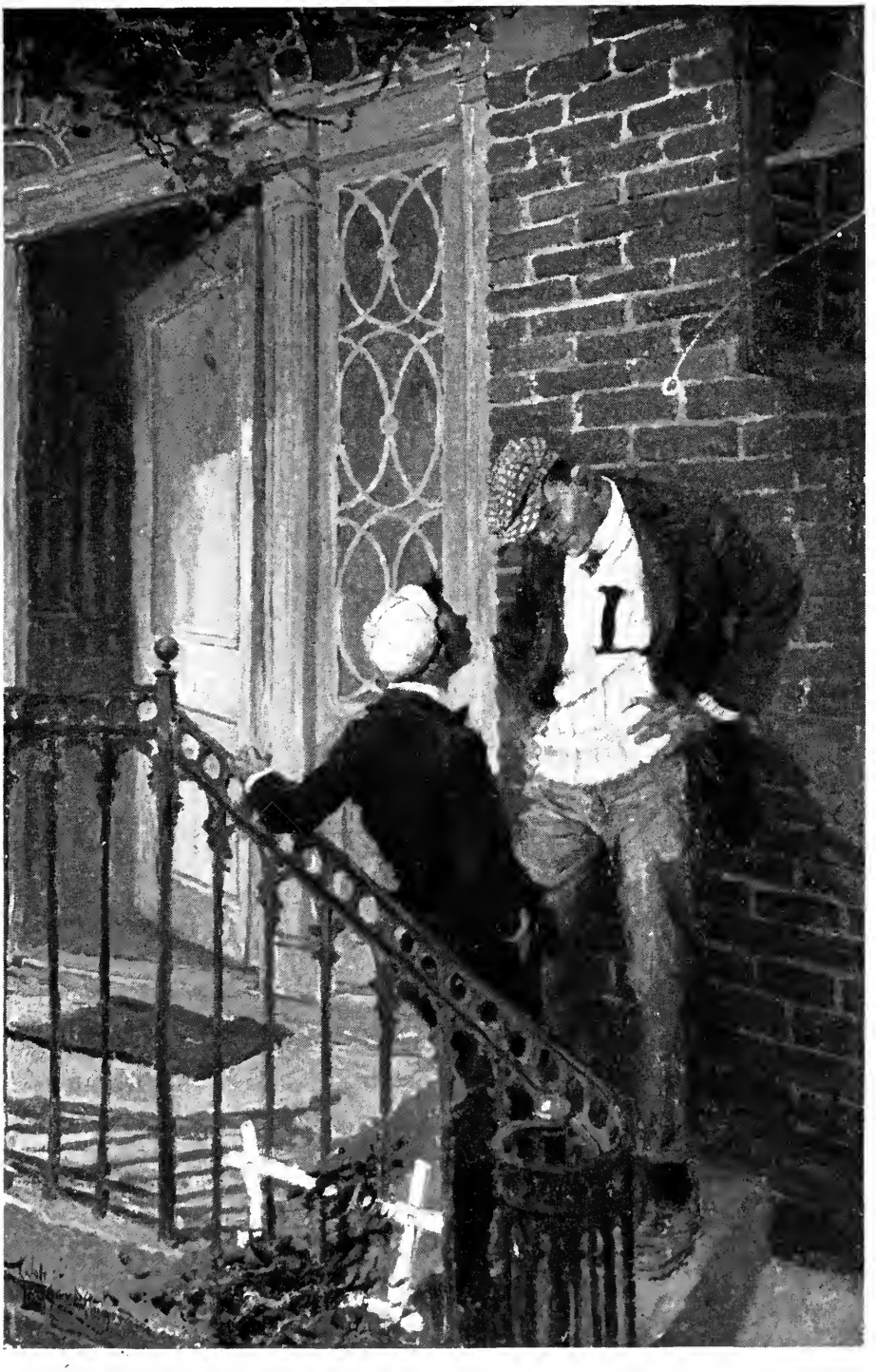

THE BUTCHER LOOKED DOWN AT THE FUNNY FACE AND SAW THE KINDLY MOTIVE UNDER THE EXAGGERATED BLUFFNESS

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THE BOY SCOUTS BOOK OF STORIES

EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

So much of my time is given to reading boys' books that, when I read books for grown-ups, now and again I find myself saying, "What a bully story for boys to read!" Latterly, I have been putting down the titles of such stories. When the list began to lengthen, it occurred to me, why not make a book for boys containing stories like that: stories written for grown-ups but also of interest to boys in their early teens.

Such a collection of stories could not be made, however, without the consent of the authors and publishers, but since everybody loves a boy, I didn't have much trouble in convincing them they ought to grant permission to use their stories for such a purpose and, as a result, I am pleased to present to the boy readers of our country the BOY SCOUTS BOOK OF STORIES.

Looking over the list, I find it covers pretty well the reading interests of boys. There are stories about boy scouts, school stories, stories of the sea and "wild west" stories, detective and mystery stories; most of all, though, a goodly number of humorous stories, and I am willing to hazard the guess there will be no regrets on the part of readers because the selections happen to abound in stories of the latter sort.

How about it, boys?

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I.—The Great Big Man*

By Owen Johnson

THE noon bell was about to ring, the one glorious spring note of that inexorable "Gym" bell that ruled the school with its iron tongue. For at noon, on the first liberating stroke, the long winter term died and the Easter vacation became a fact.

Inside Memorial Hall the impatient classes stirred nervously, counting off the minutes, sitting gingerly on the seat-edges for fear of wrinkling the carefully pressed suits or shifting solicitously the sharpened trousers in peril of a bagging at the knees. Heavens! how interminable the hour was, sitting there in a planked shirt and a fashion-high collar—and what a recitation! Would Easter ever begin, that long-

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coveted vacation when the growing boy, according to theory, goes home to rest from the fatiguing draining of his brain, but in reality returns exhausted by dinners, dances, and theaters, with perhaps a little touch of the measles to exchange with his neighbors. Even the masters droned through the perfunctory exercises, flunking the boys by twos and threes, by groups, by long rows, but without malice or emotion.

Outside, in the roadway, by the steps, waited a long, incongruous line of vehicles, scraped together from every stable in the countryside, forty-odd. A few buggies for nabobs in the Upper House, two-seated rigs (holding eight), country buckboards, excursion wagons to be filled according to capacity at twenty-five cents the trip, hacks from Trenton, and the regulation stage-coach—all piled high with bags and suitcases, waiting for the bell that would start them on the scramble for the Trenton station, five miles away. At the horses' heads the lazy negroes lolled, drawing languid puffs from their cigarettes, unconcerned.

Suddenly the bell rang out, and the supine teamsters, galvanizing into life, jumped to their seats. The next moment, down the steps, pell-mell, scrambling and scuffling, swarming over the carriages, with joyful clamor, the school arrived. In an instant the first buggies were off, with whips frantically plied, disputing at a gallop the race to Trenton.

Then the air was filled with shouts.

"Where's Butsey?"
"Oh, you, Red Dog!"
"Where's my bag?"
"Jump in!"
"Oh, we'll never get there!"
"Drive on!"
"Don't wait!"
"Where's Jack?"
"Hurry up, you loafer!"
"Hurry up, you butter-fingers!"
"Get in!"
"Pile in!"
"Haul him in!"
"We're off!"
"Hurrah!"

Wagon after wagon, crammed with joyful boyhood, disappeared in a cloud of dust, while back returned a confused uproar of broken cheers, snatches of songs, with whoops and shrieks for more speed dominating the whole. The last load rollicked away to join the mad race, where far ahead a dozen buggies, with foam-flecked horses, vied with one another, their youthful jockeys waving their hats, hurling defiance back and forth, or shrieking with delight as each antagonist was caught and left behind.

The sounds of striving died away, the campus grew still once more. The few who had elected to wait until after luncheon scattered hurriedly about

the circle and disappeared in the houses, to fling last armfuls into the already bursting trunks.

On top of Memorial steps the Great Big Man remained, solitary and marooned, gazing over the fields, down the road to Trenton, where still the rising dust-clouds showed the struggle toward vacation. He stood like a monument, gazing fixedly, struggling with all the might of his twelve years to conquer the awful feeling of homesickness that came to him. Homesickness—the very word was an anomaly: what home had he to go to? An orphan without ever having known his father, scarcely remembering his mother in the hazy reflections of years, little Joshua Tibbets had arrived at the school at the beginning of the winter term, to enter the shell,* and gradually pass through the forms in six or seven years.

The boys of the Dickinson, after a glance at his funny little body and his plaintive, doglike face, had baptized him the "Great Big Man" (Big Man for short), and had elected him the child of the house.

He had never known what homesickness was before. He had had a premonition of it, perhaps, from time to time during the last week, wondering a little in the classroom as each day Snorky Green, beside him, calculated the days until Easter, then the hours, then the minutes. He had watched him with an amused, uncomprehending interest. Why was he so anxious to be off? After all, he, the Big Man, found

* The "shell" is the lowest class.

it a pleasant place, after the wearisome life from hotel to hotel. He liked the boys; they were kind to him, and looked after his moral and spiritual welfare with bluff but affectionate solicitude. It is true, one was always hungry, and only ten and a half hours' sleep was a refinement of cruelty unworthy of a great institution. But it was pleasant running over to the jigger-shop and doing errands for giants like Reiter and Butcher Stevens, with the privileges of the commission. He liked to be tumbled in the grass by the great tackle of the football eleven, or thrown gently from arm to arm like a medicine-ball, quits for the privileges of pommeling his big friends *ad libitum* and without fear of reprisals. And then what a privilege to be allowed to run out on the field and fetch the nose-guard or useless bandage, thrown down haphazard, with the confidence that he, the Big Man, was there to fetch and guard! Then he was permitted to share their studies, to read slowly from handy, literal translations, his head cushioned on the Egg-head's knee, while the lounging group swore genially at Pius Æneas or sympathized with Catiline. He shagged elusive balls and paraded the bats at shoulder-arms. He opened the mail, and sorted it, fetching the bag from Farnum's. He was even allowed to stand treat to the mighty men of the house whenever the change in his pocket became too heavy for comfort.

In return he was taught to box, to wind tennis

rackets, to blacken shoes, to crease trousers, and sew on the buttons of the house. Nothing was lacking to his complete happiness.

Then lately he had begun to realize that there was something else in the school life, outside it, but very much a part of it—vacation.

At first the idea of quitting such a fascinating life was quite incomprehensible to him. What gorging dinner-party could compare with the thrill of feasting at midnight on crackers and cheese, deviled ham, boned chicken, mince pie and root beer, by the light of a solitary candle, with the cracks of the doors and windows smothered with rugs and blankets, listening at every mouthful for the tread of the master that sometimes (oh, acme of delight!) actually passed unsuspectingly by the door?

Still, there was a joy in leaving all this. He began to notice it distinctly when the trunks were hauled from the cellar and the packing began. The packing —what a lark that had been! He had folded so many coats and trousers, carefully, in their creases, under Macnooder's generous instructions, and, perched on the edge of the banisters like a queer little marmoset, he had watched Wash Simmons throw great armfuls of assorted clothing into the trays and churn them into place with a baseball bat, while the Triumphant Egghead carefully built up his structure with nicety and tenderness. Only he, the Big Man, sworn to secrecy, knew what Hickey had surreptitiously in-

serted in the bottom of Egghead's trunk, and also what, from the depths of Wash's muddled clothing, would greet the fond mother or sister who did the unpacking; and every time he thought of it he laughed one of those laughs that pain. Then gleefully he had watched Macnooder stretching a strap until it burst with consequences dire, to the complete satisfaction of Hickey, Turkey, Wash, and the Egghead, who, embracing fondly on the top of another trunk, were assisting Butcher Stevens to close an impossible gap.

Yet into all this amusement a little strain of melancholy had stolen. Here was a sensation of which he was not part, an emotion he did not know. Still, his imagination did not seize it; he could not think of the halls quiet, with no familiar figures lolling out of the windows, or a campus unbrokenly green.

Now from his lonely eerie on Memorial steps, looking down the road to vacation, the Great Big Man suddenly understood—understood and felt. It was he who had gone away, not they. The school he loved was not with him, but roaring down to Trenton. No one had thought to invite him for a visit; but then, why should any one?

"I'm only a runt, after all," he said, angrily, to himself. He stuck his fists deep in his pockets, and went down the steps like a soldier and across the campus chanting valorously the football slogan:

Bill kicked,
Dunham kicked.
They both kicked together,
But Bill kicked mighty hard.
Flash ran,
Charlie ran,
Then Pennington lost her grip;
She also lost the championship—
Siss, boom, ah!

After all, he could sleep late; that was something. Then in four days the baseball squad would return, and there would be long afternoon practices to watch, lolling on the turf, with an occasional foul to retrieve. He would read "The Count of Monte Cristo," and follow "The Three Musketeers" through a thousand far-off adventures, and "Lorna Doone," —there was always the great John Ridd, bigger even than Turkey or the Waladoo Bird.

He arrived resolutely at the Dickinson, and started up the deserted stairs for his room. There was only one thing he feared; he did not want Mrs. Rogers, wife of the housemaster, to "mother" him. Anything but that! He was glad that after luncheon he would have to take his meals at the Lodge. That would avert embarrassing situations, for whatever his friends might think, he, the Great Big Man, was a runt in stature only.

To express fully the excessive gayety he enjoyed, he tramped to his room, bawling out:

"'Tis a jolly life we lead,
Care and sorrow we defy."

All at once a gruff voice spoke:

"My what a lot of noise for a Great Big Man!"

The Big Man stopped thunderstruck. The voice came from Butcher Stevens' room. Cautiously he tiptoed down the hall and paused, with his funny little nose and eyes peering around the door-jamb. Sure enough, there was Butcher, and there were the Butcher's trunks and bags. What could it mean?

"I say," he began, according to etiquette, "is that you, Butcher?"

"Very much so, Big Man."

"What are you doing here?"

"The faculty, Big Man, desire my presence," said the Butcher, sarcastically. "They would like my expert advice on a few problems that are *per*plexing them."

"Ah," said the Great Big Man, slowly. Then he understood. The Butcher had been caught two nights before returning by Sawtelle's window at a very late hour. He did not know exactly the facts because he had been told not to be too inquisitive, and he was accustomed to obeying instructions. Supposing the faculty should expel him! To the Big Man such a sentence meant the end of all things, something too horrible to contemplate. So he said, "Oh, Butcher, is it serious?"

"Rather, youngster; rather, I should say."

"What *will* the baseball team do?" said the Big Man, overwhelmed.

"That's what's worrying me," replied the crack first-baseman, gloomily. He rose and went to the window, where he stood beating a tattoo.

"You don't suppose Crazy Opdyke could cover the bag, do you?" said the Big Man.

"Not in a lifetime."

"How about Stubby?"

"Too short."

"They might do something with the Waladoo."

"Not for first; he can't stop anything below his knees."

"Then I don't see how we're going to beat Andover, Butcher."

"It does look bad."

"Do you think the faculty will—will——"

"Fire me? Pretty certain, youngster."

"Oh, Butcher!"

"Trouble is, they've got the goods on me—dead to rights."

"But does the Doctor know how it'll break up the nine?"

Butcher laughed loudly.

"He doesn't *ap*-preciate that, youngster."

"No," said the Big Man, reflectively. "They never do, do they?"

The luncheon bell rang, and they hurried down. The Big Man was overwhelmed by the discovery. If Butcher didn't cover first, how could they ever beat Andover and the Princeton freshmen? Even Hill

School and Pennington might trounce them. He fell into a brown melancholy, until suddenly he caught the sympathetic glance of Mrs. Rogers on him, and for fear that she would think it was due to his own weakness, he began to chat volubly.

He had always been a little in awe of the Butcher. Not that the Butcher had not been friendly; but he was so blunt and rough and unbending that he rather repelled intimacy. He watched him covertly, admiring the bravado with which he pretended unconcern. It must be awful to be threatened with expulsion and actually to be expelled, to have your whole life ruined, once and forever. The Big Man's heart was stirred. He said to himself that he had not been sympathetic enough, and he resolved to repair the error. So, luncheon over, he said with an appearance of carelessness:

"I say, old man, come on over to the jigger-shop. I'll set 'em up. I'm pretty flush, you know."

The Butcher looked down at the funny face and saw the kindly motive under the exaggerated bluffness. Being touched by it, he said gruffly:

"Well; come on, then, you old billionaire!"

The Big Man felt a great movement of sympathy in him for his big comrade. He would have liked to slip his little fist in the great brown hand and say something appropriate, only he could think of nothing appropriate. Then he remembered that among men there should be no letting down, no sentimentality. So

he lounged along, squinting up at the Butcher and trying to copy his rolling gait.

At the jigger-shop, Al lifted his eyebrows in well-informed disapproval, saying curtly:

"What are you doing here, you Butcher, you?"

"Building up my constitution," said Stevens, with a frown. "I'm staying because I like it, of course. Lawrenceville is just lovely at Easter: spring birds and violets, and that sort of thing."

"You're a nice one," said Al, a baseball enthusiast. "Why couldn't you behave until after the Andover game?"

"Of course; but you needn't rub it in," replied the Butcher, staring at the floor. "Give me a double strawberry, and heave it over."

Al, seeing him not insensible, relented. He added another dab to the double jigger already delivered, and said, shoving over the glass:

"It's pretty hard luck on the team, Butcher. There's no one hereabouts can hold down the bag like you. Heard anything definite?"

"No."

"What do you think?"

"I'd hate to say."

"Is any one doing anything?"

"Cap Kiefer is to see the Doctor to-night."

"I say, Butcher," said the Big Man, in sudden fear, "you won't go up to Andover and play against us, will you?"

"Against the school! Well, rather not!" said the Butcher, indignantly. Then he added: "No; if they fire me, I know what I'll do."

The Big Man wondered if he contemplated suicide; that must be the natural thing to do when one is expelled. He felt that he must keep near Butcher, close all the day. So he made bold to wander about with him, watching him with solicitude.

They stopped at Lalo's for a hot dog, and lingered at Bill Appleby's, where the Butcher mournfully tried the new mits and swung the bats with critical consideration. Then feeling hungry, they trudged up to Conover's for pancakes and syrup. Everywhere was the same feeling of dismay; what would become of the baseball nine? Then it suddenly dawned upon the Big Man that no one seemed to be sorry on the Butcher's account. He stopped with a pancake poised on his fork, looked about to make sure no one could hear him, and blurted out:

"I say, Butcher, it's not only on account of first base, you know; I'm darn sorry for *you,* honest!"

"Why, you profane little cuss," said the Butcher, frowning, "who told you to swear?"

"Don't make fun of me, Butcher," said the Great Big Man, feeling very little; "I meant it."

"Conover," said the Butcher, loudly, "more pancakes, and brown 'em!"

He, too, had been struck by the fact that in the general mourning there had been scant attention paid to

his personal fortunes. He had prided himself on the fact that he was not susceptible to "feelings," that he neither gave nor asked for sympathy. He was older than his associates, but years had never reconciled him to Latin or Greek or, for that matter, to mathematics in simple or aggravated form. He had been the bully of his village out in northern Iowa, and when a stranger came, he trounced him first, and cemented the friendship afterward. He liked hard knocks, give and take. He liked the school because there was the long football season in the autumn, with the joy of battling, with every sinew of the body alert and the humming of cheers indistinctly heard, as he rammed through the yielding line. Then the spring meant long hours of romping over the smooth diamond, cutting down impossible hits, guarding first base like a bull-dog, pulling down the high ones, smothering the wild throws that came ripping along the ground, threatening to jump up against his eyes, throws that other fellows dodged. He was in the company of equals, of good fighters, like Charley De Soto, Hickey, Flash Condit, and Turkey, fellows it was a joy to fight beside. Also, it was good to feel that four hundred-odd wearers of the red and black put their trust in him, and that trust became very sacred to him. He played hard—very hard, but cleanly, because combat was the joy of life to him. He broke other rules, not as a lark, but out of the same fierce desire for battle, to seek out danger

wherever he could find it. He had been caught fair and square, and he knew that for that particular offense there was only one punishment. Yet he hoped against hope, suddenly realizing what it would cost him to give up the great school where, however, he had never sought friendships or anything beyond the admiration of his mates.

The sympathy of the Big Man startled him, then made him uncomfortable. He had no intention of crying out, and he did not like or understand the new emotion that rose in him as he wondered when his sentence would come.

"Well, youngster," he said, gruffly, "had enough? Have another round?"

"I've had enough," said the Big Man, heaving a sigh. "Let me treat, Butcher."

"Not to-day, youngster."

"Butcher, I—I'd like to. I'm awfully flush."

"Not to-day."

"Let's match for it."

"What!" said the Butcher, fiercely. "Don't let me hear any more of that talk. You've got to grow up first."

The Big Man, thus rebuked, acquiesced meekly. The two strolled back to the campus in silence.

"Suppose we have a catch," said the Big Man, tentatively.

"All right," said the Butcher, smiling.

Intrenched behind a gigantic mit, the Big Man

strove valorously to hold the difficult balls. After a long period of this mitigated pleasure they sat down to rest. Then Cap Kiefer's stocky figure appeared around the Dickinson, and the Butcher went off for a long, solemn consultation.

The Big Man, thus relieved of responsibility, felt terribly alone. He went to his room and took down volume two of "The Count of Monte Cristo," and stretched out on the window-seat. Somehow the stupendous adventures failed to enthrall him. It was still throughout the house. He caught himself listening for the patter of Hickey's shoes above, dancing a breakdown, or the rumble of Egghead's laugh down the hall, or a voice calling, "Who can lend me a pair of suspenders?"

And the window was empty. It seemed so strange to look up from the printed page and find no one in the Woodhull opposite, shaving painfully at the window, or lolling like himself over a novel, all the time keeping an eye on the life below. He could not jeer at Two Inches Brown and Crazy Opdyke practicing curves, nor assure them that the Dickinson nine would just fatten on those easy ones. No one halloed from house to house, no voice below drawled out:

"Oh, you Great *Big Man!* Stick your head out of the window!"

There was no one to call across for the time o' day, or for just a nickel to buy stamps, or for the loan of a baseball glove, or a sweater, or a collar button, scis-

sors, button-hook, or fifty and one articles that are never bought but borrowed.

The Great Big Man let "The Count of Monte Cristo" tumble unheeded on the floor, seized a tennis ball, and went across the campus to the esplanade of the Upper House, where for half an hour he bounced the ball against the rim of the ledge, a privilege that only a fourth former may enjoy. Tiring of this, he wandered down to the pond, where he skimmed innumerable flat stones until he had exhausted the attractions of this limited amusement.

"I—I'm getting homesick," he admitted finally. "I wish I had a dog—something living—around."

At supper-time he saw the Butcher again, and forgot his own loneliness in the concern he felt for his big friend. He remembered that the Butcher had said that if he were expelled he knew what he would do. What had he meant by that? Something terrible. He glanced up at the Butcher, and, being very apprehensive, made bold to ask:

"Butcher, I say, what does Cap think?"

"He hasn't seen the Doctor yet," said the Butcher. "He'll see him to-night. I guess I'll go over myself, just to leave a calling-card accordin' to *et*-iquette!"

The Big Man kept his own counsel, but when the Butcher, after dinner, disappeared through the awful portal of Foundation House, he sat down in the dark under a distant tree to watch. In a short five minutes the Butcher reappeared, stood a moment undecided on

the steps, stooped, picked up a handful of gravel, flung it into the air with a laugh, and started along the circle.

"Butcher!"

"Hello, who's that!"

"It's me, Butcher," said the Big Man, slipping his hand into the other's; "I—I wanted to know."

"You aren't going to get sentimental, are you, youngster?" said Stevens, disapprovingly.

"Please, Butcher," said the Great Big Man, pleadingly, "don't be cross with me! Is there any hope?"

"The Doctor won't see me, young one," said the Butcher, "but the *at*-mosphere was not encouraging."

"I'm sorry."

"Honest?"

"Honest."

They went hand in hand over to the chapel, where they chose the back steps and settled down with the great walls at their back and plenty of gravel at their feet to fling aimlessly into the dusky night.

"Butcher?"

"Well, Big Man!"

"What will you do if—if they fire you?"

"Oh, lots of things. I'll go hunting for gold somewhere, or strike out for South America or Africa."

"Oh!" The Big Man was immensely relieved; but he added incredulously, "Then you'll give up football and baseball?"

"Looks that way."

"You won't mind?"

"Yes," said the Butcher, suddenly, "I will mind. I'll hate to leave the old school. I'd like to have one chance more."

"Why don't you tell the Doctor that?"

"Never! I don't cry out when I'm caught, youngster. I take my punishment."

"Yes," said the Big Man, reflecting. "That's right, I suppose; but, then, there's the team to think of, you know."

They sat for a long time in silence, broken suddenly by the Butcher's voice, not so gruff as usual.

"Say, Big Man—feeling sort of homesick?"

No answer.

"Just a bit?"

Still no answer. The Butcher looked down, and saw the Big Man struggling desperately to hold in the sobs.

"Here, none of that, youngster!" he exclaimed in alarm. "Brace up, old man!"

"I—I'm all right," said the Great Big Man with difficulty. "It's nothing."

The Butcher patted him on the shoulder, and then drew his arm around the little body. The Big Man put his head down and blubbered, just as though he had been a little fellow, while his companion sat perplexed, wondering what to do or say in the strange situation.

"So he's a little homesick, is he?" he said lamely.

"N-o-o," said the Great Big Man, "not just that; it's—it's all the fellows I miss."

The Butcher was silent. He, too, began to understand that feeling; only he, in his battling pride, resisted fiercely the weakness.

"You've got an uncle somewhere, haven't you, youngster?" he said gently. "Doesn't he look after you in vacation-time?"

"I don't miss *him,*" replied the Big Man, shaking his head. Then he pulled himself together and said apologetically: "It's just being left behind that makes me such a damned cry-baby."

"Youngster," said the Butcher, sternly, "your language is *at*-rocious. Such words do not sound well in the mouth of a suckling of your size."

"I didn't mean to," said the Big Man, blushing.

"You must leave something to grow up for, young man," said the Butcher, profoundly. "Now tell me about that uncle of yours. I don't fancy his silhouette."

The Great Big Man, thus encouraged, poured out his lonely starved little heart, while the Butcher listened sympathetically, feeling a certain comfort in sitting with his arm around a little fellow-being. Not that he was sensible of giving much comfort; his comments, he felt, were certainly inadequate; nor did he measure in any way up to the situation.

"Now it's better, eh, Big Man?" he said at last

when the little fellow had stopped. "Does you sort of good to talk things out."

"Oh, yes; thank you, Butcher."

"All right, then, youngster."

"All right. I say, you—you don't ever feel that way, do you—homesick, I mean?"

"Not much."

"You've got a home, haven't you?"

"Quite too much, young one. If they fire me, I'll keep away from there. Strike out for myself."

"Of course, then, it's different."

"Young one," said the Butcher, suddenly, "that's not quite honest. If I have to clear out of here, it will cut me up *con*-siderable."

"Honest?"

"A fact. I didn't know it before; but it will cut me up to strike out and leave all this behind. I want another chance; and do you know why?"

"Why?"

"I'd like to make friends. Oh, I haven't got any real friends, youngster; you needn't shake your head. It's my fault. I know it. You're the first mortal soul who cared what became of me. All the rest are thinking of the team."

"Now, Butcher——"

"Don't think I'm crying out!" said the Butcher, in instant alarm. "It's all been up to me. Truth is, I've been too darned proud. But I'd like to get another whack at it."

"Perhaps you will, Butcher."

"No, no, there's no reason why I should." The Butcher sat solemnly a moment, flinging pebbles down into the dark tennis courts. Suddenly he said: "Look here, Big Man, I'm going to give you some good advice."

"All right, Butcher."

"And I want you to tuck it away in your thinker —savez? You're a nice kid now, a good sort, but you've got a lot of chances for being spoiled. Don't get fresh. Don't get a swelled head just because a lot of the older fellows let you play around. There's nothing so hateful in the sight of God or man as a fresh kid."

"You don't think——" began the Big Man in dismay.

"No; you're all right now. You're quiet, and don't tag around, and you're a good sort, darned if you aren't, and that's why I don't want to see you spoiled. Now a straight question: Do you smoke?"

"Why, that is—well, Butcher, I did try once a puff on Snookers' cigarette."

"You ought to be spanked!" said the Butcher, angrily. "And when I get hold of Snookers, I'll tan him. The idea of his letting you! Don't you monkey around tobacco yet a while. First of all, it's fresh, and second, you've got to *grow*. You want to make a team, don't you, while you're here?"

"O-o-h!" said the Great Big Man with a long sigh.

"Then just stick to growing. 'Cause you've got work cut out for you there. Now I'm not preachin'; I'm saying that you want to fill out and grow up and do something. Harkee."

"All right."

"Cut out Snookers and that gang. Pick out the fellows that count, as you go along, and just remember this, if you forget the rest: if you want to put ducks in Tabby's bed or nail down his desk, do it because *you* want to do it, not because some other fellow wants you to do it. D'ye hear?"

"Yes, Butcher."

"Remember that, youngster; if I'd stuck to it, I'd kept out of a peck of trouble." He reflected a moment and added: "Then I'd study a little. It's not a bad thing, I guess, in the long run, and it gets the masters on your side. And now jump up, and we'll trot home."

The following night the Big Man, again under his tree, waited for the result of the conference that was going on inside Foundation House between the Doctor and the Butcher and Cap Kiefer. It was long, very long. The minutes went slowly, and it was very dark there, with hardly a light showing in the circle of houses that ordinarily seemed like a procession of lighted ferry-boats. After an interminable hour, the Butcher and Cap came out. He needed no word to tell

what their attitudes showed only too plainly: the Butcher was expelled!

The Big Man waited until the two had passed into the night, and then, with a sudden resolve, went bravely to the doorbell and rang. Before he quite appreciated the audacity of his act, he found himself in the sanctum facing a much-perplexed head master.

"Doctor, I—I——" The Big Man stopped, overwhelmed by the awful majesty of the Doctor, on whose face still sat the grimness of the past conference.

"Well, Joshua, what's the matter?" said the head master, relaxing a bit before one of his favorites.

"Please, sir, I'm a little—a little embarrassed, I'm afraid," said the Great Big Man, desperately.

"Am I so terrible as all that?" said the Doctor, smiling.

"Yes, sir—you are," the Big Man replied frankly. Then he said, plunging in, "Doctor, is the Butcher—is Stevens—are you going to—expel him?"

"That is my painful duty, Joshua," said the Doctor, frowning.

"Oh, Doctor," said the Big Man all in a breath, "you don't know—you're making a mistake."

"I am? Why, Joshua?"

"Because—you don't know. Because the Butcher won't tell you, he's too proud, sir; because he doesn't want to cry out, sir."

"What do you mean exactly?" said the Doctor in surprise. "Does Stevens know you're here?"

"Oh, Heavens, no, sir!" said the Big Man in horror. "And you must never tell him, sir; that would be too terrible."

"Joshua," said the Doctor, impressively, "I am expelling Stevens because he is just the influence I don't want boys of your age to come under."

"Oh, yes, sir," said the Big Man, "I know you think that, sir; but really, Doctor, that's where you are wrong; really you are, sir."

The Doctor saw there was something under the surface, and he encouraged the little fellow to talk. The Big Man, forgetting all fear in the seriousness of the situation, told the listening head master all the Butcher's conversation with him on the chapel steps the night before—told it simply and eloquently, with an ardor that bespoke absolute faith. Then suddenly he stopped.

"That's all, sir," he said, frightened.

The Doctor rose and walked back and forth, troubled and perplexed. There was no doubting the sincerity of the recital: it was a side of Stevens he had not guessed. Finally he turned and rested his hand on the Big Man's shoulders.

"Thank you," he said; "it does put another light on the question. I'll think it over."

When, ten days later, the school came trickling home along the road from vacation, they saw, against

all hope, the Butcher holding down first base, frolicking over the diamond in the old familiar way, and a great shout of joy and relief went up. But how it had happened no one ever knew, least of all Cap and the Butcher, who had gone from Foundation House that night in settled despair.

To add to Butcher's mystification, the Doctor, in announcing his reprieve, had added:

"I've decided to make a change, Stevens. I'm going to put Tibbetts in to room with you. I place him in your charge. I'm going to try a little responsibility on you."

II.—A Twilight Adventure*

By Melville Davisson Post

A good many boys are fortunate in their "aunts" and "uncles." Such a one was Martin with his "Uncle Abner." The experiences they had together down in the mountains of Virginia were very remarkable, and often most desperate, as in the case of the following story, but one of the many set down by Martin, grown to be a man, in the book from which this was taken. But, it's enough to make you boys wish you, too, lived with an "Uncle Abner" in a similar early Virginia settlement, with the wild forests so near at hand.—THE EDITOR.

IT was a strange scene that we approached. Before a crossroad leading into a grove of beech trees, a man sat on his horse with a rifle across his saddle. He did not speak until we were before him in the road, and then his words were sinister.

"Ride on!" he said.

But my Uncle Abner did not ride on. He pulled up his big chestnut and looked calmly at the man.

*Reprinted from "Uncle Abner." Copyright, 1918, by D. Appleton and Company.

"You speak like one having authority," he said.

The man answered with an oath.

"Ride on, or you'll get into trouble!"

Abner's eyes traveled over the speaker with a deliberate scrutiny; then he answered: "Are the roads of Virginia held by arms?"

"This one is," replied the man.

"I think not," replied my Uncle Abner, and, touching his horse with his heel, he turned into the crossroad.

The man seized his weapon, and I heard the hammer click under his thumb. Abner must have heard it, too, but he did not turn his broad back. He only called to me in his usual matter-of-fact voice:

"Go on, Martin; I will overtake you."

The man brought his gun up to his middle, but he did not shoot. He was like all those who undertake to command obedience without having first determined precisely what they will do if their orders are disregarded. He was prepared to threaten with desperate words, but not to support that threat with a desperate act, and he hung there uncertain, cursing under his breath.

I would have gone on as my uncle had told me to do, but now the man came to a decision.

"No!" he said; "if he goes in, you go in, too!"

And he seized my bridle and turned my horse into the crossroad; then he followed.

There is a long twilight in these hills. The sun

departs, but the day remains. A sort of weird, dim, elfin day, that dawns at sunset, and envelops and possesses the world. The land is full of light, but it is the light of no heavenly sun. It is a light equal everywhere, as though the earth strove to illumine itself, and succeeded with that labor.

The stars are not yet out. Now and then a pale moon rides in the sky, but it has no power, and the light is not from it. The wind is usually gone; the air is soft, and the fragrance of the fields fills it like a perfume. The noises of the day and of the creatures that go about by day cease, and the noises of the night and of the creatures that haunt the night begin. The bat swoops and circles in the maddest action, but without a sound. The eye sees him, but the ear hears nothing. The whippoorwill begins his plaintive cry, and one hears, but does not see.

It is a world that we do not understand, for we are creatures of the sun, and we are fearful lest we come upon things at work here, of which we have no experience, and that may be able to justify themselves against our reason. And so a man falls into silence when he travels in this twilight, and he looks and listens with his senses out on guard.

It was an old wagon-road that we entered, with the grass growing between the ruts. The horses traveled without a sound until we began to enter a grove of ancient beech trees; then the dead leaves cracked and rustled. Abner did not look behind him,

and so he did not know that I came. He knew that some one followed, but he doubtless took it for the sentinel in the road. And I did not speak.

The man with the cocked gun rode grimly behind me. I did not know whither we went or to what end. We might be shot down from behind a tree or murdered in our saddles. It was not a land where men took desperate measures upon a triviality. And I knew that Abner rode into something that little men, lacking courage, would gladly have stayed out of.

Presently my ear caught a sound, or, rather, a confused mingling of sounds, as of men digging in the earth. It was faint, and some distance beyond us in the heart of the beech woods, but as we traveled the sound increased and I could distinguish the strokes of the mattock, and the thrust of the shovel and the clatter of the earth on the dry leaves.

These sounds seemed at first to be before us, and then, a little later, off on our right-hand. And finally, through the gray boles of the beech trees in the low-land, I saw two men at work digging a pit. They had just begun their work, for there was little earth thrown out. But there was a great heap of leaves that they had cleared away, and heavy cakes of the baked crust that the mattocks had pried up. The length of the pit lay at right angles to the road, and the men were working with their backs towards us. They were in their shirts and trousers, and the heavy mottled shadows thrown by the beech limbs hovered on their backs

and shoulders like a flock of night birds. The earth was baked and hard; the mattock rang on it, and among the noises of their work they did not hear us.

I saw Abner look off at this strange labor, his head half turned, but he did not stop and we went on. The old wagon-road made a turn into the low ground. I heard the sound of horses, and a moment later we came upon a dozen men.

I shall not easily forget that scene. The beech trees had been deadened by some settler who had chopped a ring around them, and they stood gaunt with a few tattered leaves, letting the weird twilight in. Some of the men stood about, others sat on the fallen trees, and others in their saddles. But upon every man of that grim company there was the air and aspect of one who waits for something to be finished.

An old man with a heavy iron-gray beard smoked a pipe, puffing out great mouthfuls of smoke with a sort of deliberate energy; another whittled a stick, cutting a bull with horns, and shaping his work with the nicest care; and still another traced letters on the pommel of his saddle with his thumb-nail.

A little to one side a great pronged beech thrust out a gray arm, and under it two men sat on their horses, their elbows strapped to their bodies and their mouths gagged with a saddle-cloth. And behind them a man in his saddle was working with a colt halter, unraveling the twine that bound the head-

piece and seeking thereby to get a greater length of rope.

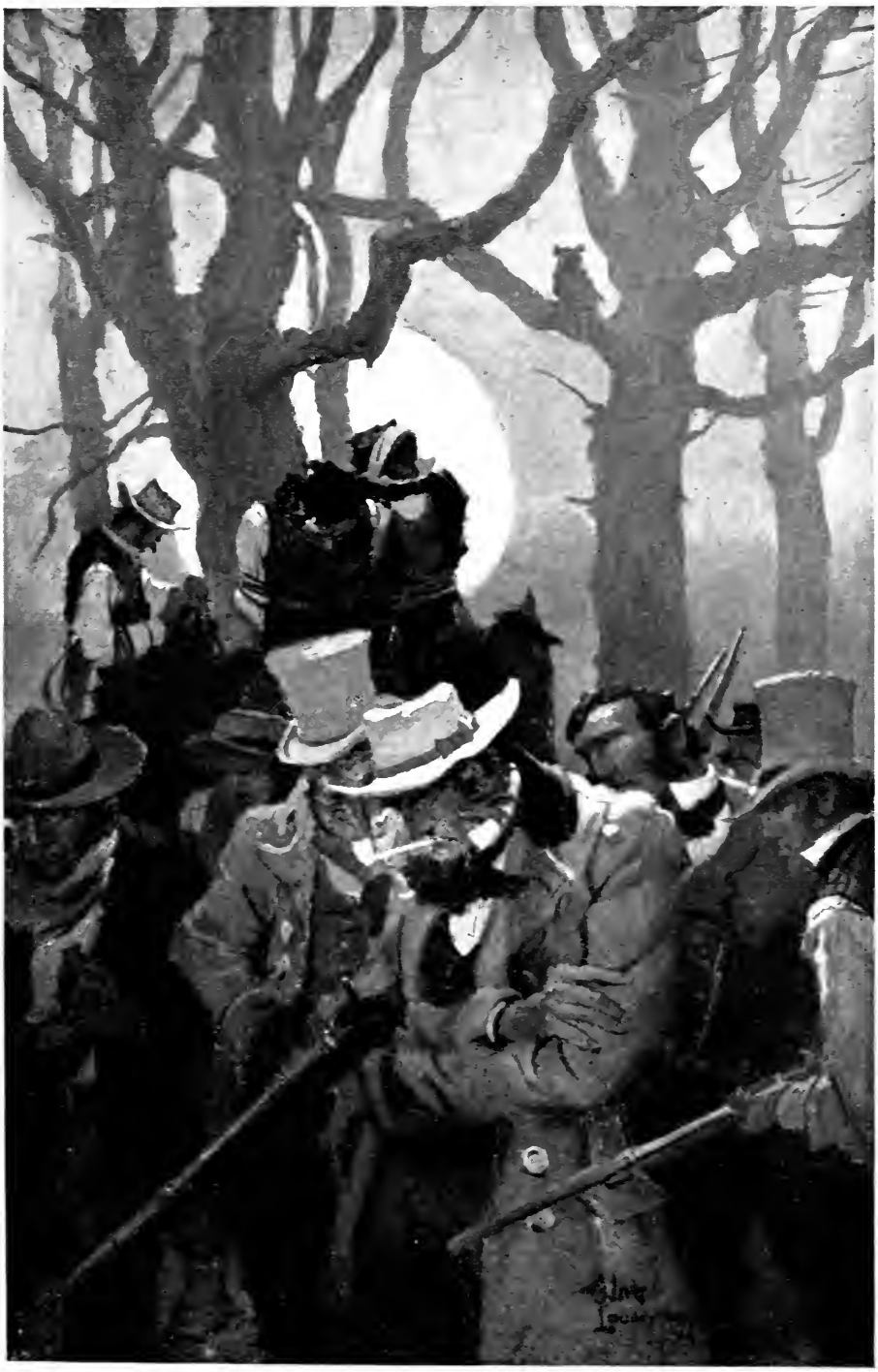
This was the scene when I caught it first. But a moment later, when my uncle rode into it, the thing burst into furious life. Men sprang up, caught his horse by the bit and covered him with weapons. Some one called for the sentinel who rode behind me, and he galloped up. For a moment there was confusion. Then the big man who had smoked with such deliberation called out my uncle's name, others repeated it, and the panic was gone. But a ring of stern, determined faces were around him and before his horse, and with the passing of the flash of action there passed no whit of the grim purpose upon which these men were set.

My uncle looked about him.

"Lemuel Arnold," he said; "Nicholas Vance, Hiram Ward, you here!"

As my uncle named these men I knew them. They were cattle grazers. Ward was the big man with the pipe. The men with them were their renters and drovers.

Their lands lay nearest to the mountains. The geographical position made for feudal customs and a certain independence of action. They were on the border, they were accustomed to say, and had to take care of themselves. And it ought to be written that they did take care of themselves with courage and



"SOME OF THE MEN STOOD ABOUT. BEHIND THEM TWO MEN SAT ON THEIR HORSES, THEIR ELBOWS STRAPPED TO THEIR BODIES"

decision, and on occasion they also took care of Virginia.

Their fathers had pushed the frontier of the dominion northward and westward and had held the land. They had fought the savage single-handed and desperately, by his own methods and with his own weapons. Ruthless and merciless, eye for eye and tooth for tooth, they returned what they were given.

They did not send to Virginia for militia when the savage came; they fought him at their doors, and followed him through the forest, and took their toll of death. They were hardier than he was, and their hands were heavier and bloodier, until the old men in the tribes of the Ohio Valley forbade these raids because they cost too much, and turned the war parties south into Kentucky.

Certain historians have written severely of these men and their ruthless methods, and prattled of humane warfare; but they wrote nursing their soft spines in the security of a civilization which these men's hands had builded, and their words are hollow.

"Abner," said Ward, "let me speak plainly. We have got an account to settle with a couple of cattle thieves and we are not going to be interfered with. Cattle stealing and murder have got to stop in these hills. We've had enough of it."

"Well," replied my uncle, "I am the last man in Virginia to interfere with that. We have all had

enough of it, and we are all determined that it must cease. But how do you propose to end it?"

"With a rope," said Ward.

"It is a good way," replied Abner, "when it is done the right way."

"What do you mean by the right way?" said Ward.

"I mean," answered my uncle, "that we have all agreed to a way and we ought to stick to our agreement. Now, I want to help you to put down cattle stealing and murder, but I want also to keep my word."

"And how have you given your word?"

"In the same way that you have given yours," said Abner, "and as every man here has given his. Our fathers found out that they could not manage the assassin and the thief when every man undertook to act for himself, so they got together and agreed upon a certain way to do these things. Now, we have indorsed what they agreed to, and promised to obey it, and I for one would like to keep my promise."

The big man's face was puzzled. Now it cleared.

"You mean the law?"

"Call it what you like," replied Abner; "it is merely the agreement of everybody to do certain things in a certain way."

The man made a decisive gesture with a jerk of his head.

"Well," he said, "we're going to do this thing our own way."

My uncle's face became thoughtful.

"Then," he said, "you will injure some innocent people."

"You mean these two blacklegs?"

And Ward indicated the prisoners with a gesture of his thumb.

My uncle lifted his face and looked at the two men some distance away beneath the great beech, as though he had but now observed them.

"I was not thinking of them," he answered. "I was thinking that if men like you and Lemuel Arnold and Nicholas Vance violate the law, lesser men will follow your example, and as you justify your act for security, they will justify theirs for revenge and plunder. And so the law will go to pieces and a lot of weak and innocent people who depend upon it for security will be left unprotected."

These were words that I have remembered, because they put the danger of lynch law in a light I had not thought of. But I saw that they would not move these determined men. Their blood was up and they received them coldly.

"Abner," said Ward, "we are not going to argue this thing with you. There are times when men have to take the law into their own hands. We live here at the foot of the mountain. Our cattle are

stolen and run across the border into Maryland. We are tired of it and we intend to stop it.

"Our lives and our property are menaced by a set of reckless desperate devils that we have determined to hunt down and hang to the first tree in sight. We did not send for you. You pushed your way in here; and now, if you are afraid of breaking the law, you can ride on, because we are going to break it—if to hang a pair of murderous devils is to break it."

I was astonished at my uncle's decision.

"Well," he said, "if the law must be broken, I will stay and help you break it!"

"Very well," replied Ward; "but don't get a wrong notion in your head, Abner. If you choose to stay, you put yourself on a footing with everybody else."

"And that is precisely what I want to do," replied Abner, "but as matters stand now, every man here has an advantage over me."

"What advantage, Abner?" said Ward.

"The advantage," answered my uncle, "that he has heard all the evidence against your prisoners and is convinced that they are guilty."

"If that is all the advantage, Abner," replied Ward, "you shall not be denied it. There has been so much cattle stealing here of late that our people living on the border finally got together and determined to stop every drove going up into the mountains that wasn't accompanied by somebody that we knew was

all right. This afternoon one of my men reported a little bunch of about a hundred steers on the road, and I stopped it. These two men were driving the cattle. I inquired if the cattle belonged to them and they replied that they were not the owners, but that they had been hired to take the drove over into Maryland. I did not know the men, and as they met my inquiries with oaths and imprecations, I was suspicious of them. I demanded the name of the owner who had hired them to drive the cattle. They said it was none of my damned business and went on. I raised the county. We overtook them, turned their cattle into a field, and brought them back until we could find out who the drove belonged to. On the road we met Bowers."

He turned and indicated the man who was working with the rope halter.

I knew the man. He was a cattle shipper, somewhat involved in debt, but who managed to buy and sell and somehow keep his head above water.

"He told us the truth. Yesterday evening he had gone over on the Stone-Coal to look at Daniel Coopman's cattle. He had heard that some grazer from your county, Abner, was on the way up to buy the cattle for stockers. He wanted to get in ahead of your man, so he left home that evening and got to Coopman's place about sundown. He took a short cut on foot over the hill, and when he came out he saw a man on the opposite ridge where the road

runs, ride away. The man seemed to have been sitting on his horse looking down into the little valley where Coopman's house stands. Bowers went down to the house, but Coopman was not there. The door was open, and Bowers says the house looked as though Coopman had just gone out of it and might come back any moment. There was no one about, because Coopman's wife had gone on a visit to her daughter, over the mountains, and the old man was alone.

"Bowers thought Coopman was out showing the cattle to the man whom he had just seen ride off, so he went out to the pasture field to look for him. He could not find him and he could not find the cattle. He came back to the house to wait until Coopman should come in. He sat down on the porch. As he sat there he noticed that the porch had been scrubbed and was still wet. He looked at it and saw that it had been scrubbed only at one place before the door. This seemed to him a little peculiar, and he wondered why Coopman had scrubbed his porch only in one place. He got up and as he went toward the door he saw that the jamb of the door was splintered at a point about half-way up. He examined this splintered place and presently discovered that it was a bullet hole.

"This alarmed him, and he went out into the yard. There he saw a wagon track leading away from the house toward the road. In the weeds he found Coop-

man's watch. He picked it up and put it into his pocket. It was a big silver watch, with Coopman's name on it, and attached to it was a buckskin string. He followed the track to the gate, where it entered the road. He discovered then that the cattle had also passed through this gate. It was now night. Bowers went back, got Coopman's saddle horse out of the stable, rode him home, and followed the track of the cattle this morning, but he saw no trace of the drove until we met him."

"What did Shifflet and Twiggs say to this story?" inquired Abner.

"They did not hear it," answered Ward; "Bowers did not talk before them. He rode aside with us when we met him."

"Did Shifflet and Twiggs know Bowers?" said Abner.

"I don't know," replied Ward; "their talk was so foul when we stopped the drove that we had to tie their mouths up."

"Is that all?" said Abner.

Ward swore a great oath.

"No!" he said. "Do you think we would hang men on that? From what Bowers told us, we thought Shifflet and Twiggs had killed Daniel Coopman and driven off his cattle; but we wanted to be certain of it, so we set out to discover what they had done with Coopman's body after they had killed him and what they had done with the wagon. We followed the trail

of the drove down to the Valley River. No wagon had crossed, but on the other side we found that a wagon and a drove of cattle had turned out of the road and gone along the basin of the river for about a mile through the woods. And there in a bend of the river we found where these devils had camped.

"There had been a great fire of logs very near to the river, but none of the ashes of this fire remained. From a circular space some twelve feet in diameter the ashes had all been shoveled off, the marks of the shovel being distinct. In the center of the place where this fire had burned the ground had been scraped clean, but near the edges there were some traces of cinders and the ground was blackened. In the river at this point, just opposite the remains of the fire, was a natural washout or hole. We made a raft of logs, cut a pole with a fork on the end and dragged the river. We found most of the wagon iron, all showing the effect of fire. Then we fastened a tin bucket to a pole and fished the washout. We brought up cinders, buttons, buckles and pieces of bone."

Ward paused.

"That settled it, and we came back here to swing the devils up."

My uncle had listened very carefully, and now he spoke.

"What did the man pay Twiggs and Shifflet?" said my uncle. "Did they tell you that when you stopped the drove?"

"Now that," answered Ward, "was another piece of damning evidence. When we searched the men we found a pocketbook on Shifflet with a hundred and fifteen dollars and some odd cents. It was Daniel Coopman's pocketbook, because there was an old tax receipt in it that had slipped down between the leather and the lining.

"We asked Shifflet where he got it, and he said that the fifteen dollars and the change was his own money and that the hundred had been paid to him by the man who had hired them to drive the cattle. He explained his possession of the pocketbook by saying that this man had the money in it, and when he went to pay them he said that they might just as well take it, too."

"Who was this man?" said Abner.

"They will not tell who he was."

"Why not?"

"Now, Abner," cried Ward, "why not, indeed! Because there never was any such man. The story is a lie out of the whole cloth. The proof is all dead against them."

"Well," replied my uncle, "what circumstantial evidence proves, depends a good deal on how you get started. It is a somewhat dangerous road to the truth, because all the sign-boards have a curious trick of pointing in the direction that you are going. Now a man will never realize this unless he turns around and starts back, then he will see, to his amaze-

ment, that the signboards have also turned. But as long as his face is set one certain way, it is of no use to talk to him, he won't listen to you; and if he sees you going the other way, he will call you a fool!"

"There is only one way in this case," said Ward.

"There are always two ways in every case," replied Abner, "that the suspected person is either guilty or innocent. You have started upon the theory that Shifflet and Twiggs are guilty. Now, suppose you had started the other way, what then?"

"Well," said Ward, "what then?"

"This, then," continued Abner. "You stop Shifflet and Twiggs on the road with Daniel Coopman's cattle, and they tell you that a man has hired them to drive this drove into Maryland. You believe that and start out to find the man. You find Bowers!"

Bowers went deadly white.

"For God's sake, Abner!" he said.

But my uncle was merciless and he drove in the conclusion.

"What then?"

There was no answer, but the faces of the men about my uncle turned toward the man whose trembling hands fingered the rope that he was preparing for another.

"But the things we found, Abner?" said Ward.

"What do they prove," continued my uncle, "now that the signboards are turned? That somebody killed Daniel Coopman and drove off his cattle,

and afterward destroyed the body and the wagon in which it was hauled away. . . . But who did that? . . . The men who were driving Daniel Coopman's cattle, or the man who was riding Daniel Coopman's horse, and carrying Daniel Coopman's watch in his pocket?"

Ward's face was a study in expression.

"Ah!" cried Abner. "Remember that the signboards have turned about. And what do they point to if we read them on the way we are going now? The man who killed Coopman was afraid to be found with the cattle, so he hired Twiggs and Shifflet to drive them into Maryland for him and follows on another road."

"But his story, Abner?" said Ward.

"And what of it?" replied by uncle. "He is taken and he must explain how he comes by the horse that he rides, and the watch that he carries, and he must find the criminal. Well, he tells you a tale to fit the facts that you will find when you go back to look, and he gives you Shifflet and Twiggs to hang."

I never saw a man in more mortal terror than Jacob Bowers. He sat in his saddle like a man bewildered.

"My God!" he said, and again he repeated it, and again.

And he had cause for that terror on him. My uncle was stern and ruthless. The pendulum had swung the other way, and the lawless monster that

Bowers had allied was now turning on himself. He saw it and his joints were unhinged with fear.

A voice crashed out of the ring of desperate men, uttering the changed opinion.

"By God!" it cried, "we've got the right man now!"

And one caught the rope out of Bowers' hand.

But my Uncle Abner rode in on them.

"Are you sure about that?" he said.

"Sure!" they echoed. "You have shown it yourself, Abner."

"No," replied my uncle, "I have not shown it. I have shown merely whither circumstantial evidence leads us when we go hotfoot after a theory. Bowers says that there was a man on the hill above Daniel Coopman's house, and this man will know that he did not kill Daniel Coopman and that his story is the truth."

They laughed in my uncle's face.

"Do you believe that there was any such person?"

My uncle seemed to increase in stature, and his voice became big and dominant.

"I do," he said, "because I am the man!"

They had got their lesson, and we rode out with Shifflet and Twiggs to a legal trial.

III.—Tad Sheldon, Second-Class Scout*

By John Fleming Wilson

A good many Scout stories have been published, hundreds of them surely, maybe a thousand, or more, in the last nine years. But the first Scout story published in the United States was "Tad Sheldon, Second-Class Scout." It appeared first in the "Saturday Evening Post." The author has written a good many stories, Scout and otherwise, since then, but none better, I think, than this, and I count it good fortune indeed that I am able to include it in this volume of short stories for boys.—THE EDITOR.

"THERE is no har-rm in the story, though it speaks ill for us big people with Misther to our names," said Chief Engineer Mickey O'Rourke, balancing his coffee cup between his two scarred hands. "Ye remimber the lasht toime I was on leave—and I wint down to Yaquina Bay with Captain Tyler on his tin gas schooner, thinkin' to mesilf it was a holiday—and all the fun I had was insthructin' the gasoline engineer in the mysteries of how to expriss one's sintimints without injurin' the

* Reprinted from "Tad Sheldon, Boy Scout," by special permission of The Macmillan Company. Copyright, 1913, by R. Harold Paget.

skipper's feelin's? Well, I landed in the bay and walked about in the woods, which is foine for the smell of thim which is like fresh tar; and one afternoon I find two legs and small feet stickin' out of a hole under a stump. I pulled on the two feet and the legs came out and at the end of thim a bhoy, mad with rage and dirt in his eyes.

" 'Ye have spoiled me fun!' says he, lookin' at me very fierce.

" 'Do yez dig yer fun out of the ground like coal?' I demands.

" 'I'm investigatin' the habits of squirrels,' says he. 'I must find out how a squirrel turns round in his hole. Does he turn a summersault or stick his tail between his ears and go over backward?'

" 'He turns inside out, like an ould sock,' I informs him, and he scorns me natural history. On the strength of mutual language we get acquainted. He is Tad Sheldon, the eldest son of Surfman No. 1 of the life-saving crew. He is fourteen years ould. Me bould Tad has troubles of his own, consisting of five other youngsters who are his gang. 'We are preparing to inter the ranks of the Bhoy Scouts,' he tells me, settin' be the side of the squirrel-hole. 'We are all tenderfeet and we can't get enlisted with the rest of the bhoys in the United States because each scout must have a dollar in the bank and between the six of us we have only one dollar and six bits and that's in me mother's apron pocket and in no bank at all.'

"'Explain,' says I.

"'''Tis this way,' says me young sprig. 'All the bhoys in the country of America have joined the scouts, which is an army of felleys that know the woods and about animals and how to light a fire, and know the law.'

"'Stop!' I orders. 'No one knows the law without gold in one hand and a book in the other. If ye knew the law ye would have yer dollar.'

"'''Tis the scouts' law,' says he. 'It tells ye to obey yer superiors and be fair to animals and kind to people ye care little for. Ye must know how to take care of yourself anywhere and be ready whin the country needs ye.'

"'And ye need a dollar?' I asks. 'Thin, why not work for it and stop pokin' yer nose down squirrel-holes, where there is neither profit nor wages?'

"'Because I'm to be the patrol-leader and I must know more than me men,' he retorts.

"Now, ye remimber I had in me pocket three pay checks, besides the money of Mr. Lof, the second engineer, which I had got for him and was carryin' about to send to him by the first friend I saw. So I took off me cap and pulled out one of the checks and said: 'Me bould boy, go down to the town and get the cash for this. Bring it back to me and I'll give ye a dollar; and thin ye can become a scout.'

"The lad looked at me and then at the governmint check. He shook his head till the dirt rolled into his

ears, for he was still full of the clods he had rubbed into himself in the hole. 'I can't take a dollar from a man in the service,' he says. 'I must earn it.'

"'The Governmint's money is clane,' I rebukes him. 'I'm ould and me legs ends just above me feet, so that I walk with difficulty. 'Tis worth a dollar to get the coin without trampin'.'

"'I will earn it from somebody not in the service,' says me bould boy, with great firmness.

"'I'm no surfman, thank Hivin!' I remarks. 'I'm in the establishmint and look down on ye.'

"'If I'd known ye were a lighthouse man I'd have taken all ye had at first,' he retorts. 'But ye have made me a fair offer and I forgive ye. My father works for his living.'

"'Well,' says I seein' that it was poor fortune to be quarrelin' with a slip of a kid, 'do yez want the dollar or not?'

"And at that we got down to fact and he explained that this scout business was most important. It appeared that the other five bhoys depinded on him to extricate thim from their difficulties and set them all up as scouts, with uniforms and knives and a knowledge of wild animals and how to build a fire in a bucket of watther. We debated the thing back and forth till the sun dropped behind the trees and the could air came up from the ground and stuck me with needles of rheumatism.

"The lad was a good lad, and he made plain to me

why his dollar was har-rd to get. He had thought of savin' the life of a summer visitor, but the law read that he must save life anyhow, without lookin' for pay. 'And we can't all save lives,' he mourns; 'for some of the kids is too young.'

"'But ye must earn money, ye scut,' I says. 'Ye're fourteen and whin I was that age I was me mother's support and joy. I made four shillin's a wake mixin' plaster for a tile-layer.'

"'I work,' he responds dolefully. 'But it goes to me mother to put with the savings in the bank against the time me father will be drowned, and leave us without support, for ye must know that we life-savers get no pensions."

"'I niver hear-ed of a life-saver bein' drowned,' I remarks. 'But it may be, for I see ye are of an exthra-ordinary family and anything may come to such. How many are there of yez?'

"'There are six of us childher, all gur-rls but me-silf,' says he, with rage in his voice. 'And Carson—he was No. 4—broke his hip in a wreck last year and died of the bruise and left five, which the crew is lookin' after. Young Carson is one of me gang and makes a dollar and four bits a week deliverin' clams to the summer folks. Ye see he can't save a dollar for the bank.' And we got up and discussed the matther going down the hill toward the town. Before we parted Tad tould me where he lived.

"'I'd call on yer father and mother,' says I, 'if I

cud be sure they would appreciate the honor. 'Tis a comedown for an officer in the lighthouse establishmint to inter the door of a surfman.'

" 'Me father has a kind heart and is good to the ould,' he answers me. 'We live beyond the station, on the bluff.' "

"With that we went our ways and I ate an imminse meal in the hotel with the dishes all spread out before me—and a pretty gur-rl behind me shoulder to point out the best of thim. Thin I walked out and started for the house of me bould Tad.

"I found thim all seated in the parlor excipt the missus, who was mixin' bread in the kitchen. I introduced mesilf, and Sheldon, who had No. 1 on his sleeve, offered me a pipe, which I took. I came down to business, houldin' me cap full of checks and money on me lap. 'Yer bould bhoy wants to be a scout and lacks a dollar,' I says. 'I like his looks, though I discovered him in a hole under a tree. He won't take me money and scorns me and the establishmint.'

" 'He must earn it,' he answers, scowlin' over his pipe.

" 'But I'll spind it,' I insists, peerin' at the bhoy out of the tail of me eye. 'If yer town weren't dhry I'd have given it to the saloon man for the good of the family he hasn't got. So why bilge at a single dollar?'

" ' 'Tis the scouts' law,' puts in me bould Tad. 'I must make it honestly.' And he settled his head be-

tween his hands and gazed reproachfully at the clane floor. So I saved me money and sat till eight o'clock exchangin' complimints with Misther Sheldon. Thin the bell rang on the hill beyond the station and he pulled his cap off the dresser, kissed his wife and the five gur-rls and wint out to his watch and a good sleep. While he was gone I stood in the doorway and Missus Sheldon tould me of the little Carsons and how Missus Carson had sworn niver to marry again excipt in the life-saving service. 'She says the Governmint took away her husband and her support,' says the good lady, 'and she'll touch no money excipt Governmint checks, being used to thim and Uncle Sam owin' her the livin' he took away.'

"'With five childher she shud look up and marry one of the men in the establishment,' I informs her. 'They are good husbands and make money.'

"'Though a widow, she has pride,' she responds sharply; and I left, with young Tad follerin' at me heels till I let him overtake me and whisper: 'If ye'd buy some clams off of young Carson it wud help the widow.'

"'I am starved for clams,' I whispers back like a base conspirator for the hand of the lovely gur-rl in the castle. 'Show me the house of me bould Carson.' He pointed to a light through the thin woods.

"They thought I was crazy whin I returned to the hotel with a hundred pounds of clams dripping down me back. 'I dug thim with me own hands this night,'

I tould the man in the office. 'Cook thim all for me breakfast.'

" 'Ye're a miracle of strength and endurance under watther,' says he; 'for 'tis now high tide and the surf is heavy.'

" 'I found their tracks in the road and followed thim to their lair,' I retorts. 'Do I get thim for breakfast?'

"And in the mor-rin', whin I was that full of clams that I needed a shell instead of a weskit, I walked on the beach with the admirin' crowds of summer tourists and lovely women. It was fine weather and the little ones were barefooted and the old ones bareheaded, and the wind was gentle, and the life-savers were polishin' their boat in full view of the wondherin' throng; and I thought of this ould tub out here on the ind of a chain and pitied thim all. Thin I sthrolled around the point to the bay and found me bould Tad dhrillin' his gang in an ould skiff, with home-made oars in their little fists and Tad sthandin' in the stern-sheets, with a huge steerin' sweep between his arms and much loud language in his mouth. When I appeared they looked at me and Tad swung his boat up to the beach and invited me in. 'We will show you a dhrill ye will remimber,' says he, very polite. And with my steppin' in he thrust the skiff off and the bhoys rowed with tremenjous strength. We wint along a full three knots an hour, till he yelled another ordher and the bhoys dropped their oars and jumped

over to one side; and I found mesilf undher the boat, with me mouth full of salt watther and ropes. Whin I saw the sun again me bould Tad says to me with disapprobation: "Ye aren't experienced in capsize dhrill.'

" 'In the establishment we use boats to keep us out of the watther,' I responds, hunting for the papers out of me cap. 'The newspapers are full of rebukes for thim that rock boats to their own peril.'

"With that they all felt ashamed and picked up me papers and grunted at each other, tryin' to blame somebody else. And when I had me checks and me papers all safe again I smiled on thim and me bould Tad took heart. ' 'Tis not to tip the boat over,' says he, 'but to get it back on an even keel after a sea's capsized her—that is the point of the dhrill.' And we pulled ashore to dhry.

"Whiles we were sittin' on the sand drainin' the watther out of our shoes a small, brassy launch came down the bay, with many men and women on her little decks. Me bould Tad looked at her with half-shut eyes and snorted. 'Some day it will be the life-saving crew that must bring those ninnies back to their homes,' he says. 'The Pacific is nothing to fool with in a gasoline launch. 'Tis betther to be safe and buy your fish.' And we watched the launch chug by and out on the bar and to sea. I learned that she was the *Gladys* by name and fetched tourists to the fishing grounds, nine miles down the coast.

"All the bhoys were respictful to me excipt young Carson, who recognized in me bould Mickey the man who had asked for a hundredweight of clams. He stared at me superciliously and refused to have speech with me, bein' ashamed, if I can judge of his youthful thoughts, of bein' in the same company with a fool.

"But I discovered that the gang was all bent on becomin' what they called second-class scouts, which they made plain to me was betther by one than a tenderfoot. But they niver mintioned the lackings of the dollar, bein' gintlemin. They wanted to know of me whether I thought that boatmanship and knowledge of sailing would be accipted be the powers instid of wisdom as to bird-tracks and intimacy with wild animals and bugs. And the heart of me opened, the youth of me came back; and I spoke to thim as one lad to another, with riference to me years in a steamer and the need of hard hands and a hard head.

"The ind of it was that they rolled across the sand to me side and we all lay belly down over a chart, which me bould Tad had procured after the manner of bhoys, and they explained to me how they knew the coast for twelve miles each side of Yaquina Bay, with the tides and currents all plain in their heads. And I was surprised at what the young scuts knew—God save thim!

"At noon the visitors suddenly stopped lookin' at the scenery and hastened away with hunger in their eyes. The crew ran the surfboat back into the sta-

tion and the bhoys drew their skiff up out of har-rm's way; and I wint back to me hotel and more clams. On the steps I found young Carson, grinning like a cat.

" 'Ye don't have to eat thim shell fish,' says he, lookin' away. 'Gimme the sack of thim and I'll peddle thim to the tourists and bring ye the money.'

" 'Whisht and away with ye!' I commanded. 'Who are you to be dictatin' the diet of yer betthers?' And he fled, without glancin' behind him.

"There was some remar-rks passed upon me wet clothes, but I tould the clerk in the office that me duty often called me to get drippin' soaked and went into the dinin'-room with a stiff neck under me proud chin. There were but few in the place and the gur-rl stood by me shoulder to pilot me through the various coorses infor-rmed me that the most of the guests were out on the *Gladys* fishin'. 'And the most of thim will have little appetite for their dinners,' she mused gently, thereby rebukin' me for a second helpin' of the fresh meat.

"In the afternoon I sthrolled out on the beach again, but saw little. A heavy fog was rowlin' from the nor'ard and the breeze before it was chill and damp as a widow's bed. I walked for me health for an hour and then ran to kape war-rm. At the ind of my spurt I was amazed to find mesilf exactly at the hotel steps. I wint in and laid me down be the fire and slept. I woke to hear a woman wailin'.

"Whin me eyes were properly open, and both pointed in the same direction, I found mesilf in the midst of a crowd. The sittin'-room was full of people, all with misery in their faces. The woman whose cries had woke me was standin' be the windey, with one hand around a handkerchief. 'My God!' she was sayin'—'My God. And me bhoy is on that boat!' And I knew that it was throuble and that many people would have their heads in their hands that night, with aches in their throats. I got up—shoes in me hand. At sight of me bright unifor-rm ten men flung themselves on me. 'You will help save them?' they cried at me.

" 'I will so soon as I get me shoes on,' I remar-rked, pushing them off me toes. I put on me boots and stood up. 'Now I'll save thim,' says I. 'Where are they?'

" 'They're on the *Gladys,*' says three at once. 'Thirty of our people—women and men and childher.'

" 'Why wake me?' I demanded crosslike. 'Aren't the brave life-savers even now sitting be the fire waitin' for people to come and be saved? I'm a chief engineer in the lighthouse establishmint and we save no lives excipt whin we can't help it. Get the life-saving crew.'

"And they explained to me bould Mickey that the crew was gone twenty miles up the coast to rescue the men on a steam schooner that was wrecked off the Siletz, word of it having come down but two hours

since. They looked at me unifor-rm and demanded their relatives at me hands. I shoved them away and wint out to think. In the prociss it occurred to me that the *Gladys* might not be lost. I wint back and asked thim how they knew it was time to mourn. 'If that launch is ashore they are as close to the fire as they can get,' I tould thim. 'And if she has gone down 'tis too late to dhry their stockings.'

"'She is lost in the fog,' I was infor-rmed. She shud have been back at her wharf at four o'clock. 'Twas now turned six and the bar was rough and blanketed in mist. The captain of the harbor tug had stated, with wise shakes of the head, that the *Gladys* cud do no more than lay outside the night and wait for sunshine and a smooth crossing. I shoved thim away from me again and wint out to think.

"It was a mur-rky fog, that sort that slathers over the watther like thick oil. Beyond the hill I cud hear the surf pounding like a riveter in a boiler. Overhead was a sheet of gray cloud, flying in curds before the wind, and in me mouth was the taste of the deep sea, blown in upon me with the scent of the storm.

"Two words with the skipper of the tug tould me the rest. 'It's coming on to blow a little from the south-ard,' said me bould mariner. 'It's so thick the *Gladys* can't find her way back. Her passengers will be cold and hungry whin they retur-rn in the mor-rnin'.'

"'And will ye not go after thim?'

"'I can't,' says he. 'Me steamer is built for the bay and one sea on the bar wud destroy the investmint. The life-saving crew is up north after a wreck.'

"'Is there no seagoin' craft in this harbor?' I demands.

"'There is not,' says he. 'Captain Tyler took his gas schooner down the coast yesterday.'

"So I sat down and thought, wonderin' how I cud sneak off me unifor-rm and have peace. For I knew me brass buttons wud keep me tongue busy all night explainin' that I was not a special providence paid by the Governmint to save fools from purgat-ry. In me thoughts I heard a wor-rd in me ear. I looked up. 'Twas me bould Tad, with a gang clustherin' at his heels.

"'Ye have followed the sea for many years?' says he.

"'I have followed it whin it was fair weather,' I responded, 'but the most of the time the sea has chased me ahead of it. Me coattail is still wet from the times it caught me. Speak up! What is it?'

"The bhoy pulled out of his jacket his ould chart and laid it before me. 'The *Gladys* is at anchor off these rocks,' says he, layin' a small finger on a spot. 'And in this weather she will have to lie there as long as she can. Whin it blows she must up anchor and get out or go ashore here.' He moved his finger a mite and it rested on what meant rocks.

"'Well,' I remar-rks.

"'Me father and all the bhoys' fathers are gone up north to rescue the crew of a steam schooner that's wrecked. Before they get back it will be too late. I thought——'

"'What were ye thinkin', ye scut?' says I fiercely.

"He dropped one foot on the other and looked me between the eyes. 'I was thinkin' we wud go afther her and save her,' says he, very bould.

"I cast me eyes over the bunch of little felleys and laughed. But me bould Tad didn't wink. 'There's people out there drownding,' says he. 'We've dhrilled and we know all the ropes; but we can't pull our skiff across the bar and the big boat is not for us, bein' the keeper's orders. And we haven't the weight to pull it anyhow.' And he stared me out of me laugh.

"'There's no seagoin' craft in the harbor,' I says, to stop his nonsinse.

"'There is another launch,' he remar-rks casually.

"We looked at each other and he thin says: 'Can ye run a gasoline engine?'

"'I have had to,' I infor-rms him, 'but I dislike the smell.'

"'The owner of this launch is not here,' says me young sprig. 'And he niver tould us not to take it. If you'll run the engine we'll be off and rescue the folks on the *Gladys!*'

"Be the saints! I laughed to kill mesilf, till the

little brat up and remar-rks to his gang: 'These light-house officers wear a unifor-rm and have no wor-rkin' clothes at all, not needin' thim in their business.'

"So I parleyed with thim a momint to save me face. 'And how will ye save thim that's dyin' in deep watthers?'

" 'By to-morrow nobody can cross the bar,' I'm infor-rmed. 'And the skipper of the *Gladys* don't know this coast. We'll just pick him up and pilot him in.'

" 'But the bar!' I protests. 'It's too rough to cross a launch inward-bound, even if ye can get out.'

" 'I know the soft places,' says the little sprig of a bhoy, very proudly. 'Come on.'

" 'And if I don't come?' I inquired.

"He leaned over and touched the brass buttons on me jacket. 'Ye have sworn to do your best,' says he. 'I've not had a chance to take me oath yet as a second-class scout, but between ourselves we have done so. I appeal to yez as one man to another.'

"I got up. 'I niver expicted to serve undher so small a captain,' I remarks, 'but that is neither here nor there. Where is that gasoline engine?'

"We stepped proudly off in the dusk, me bould Tad houldin' himsilf very straight beside me and the gang marchin' at our heels shoulder to shoulder. Prisintly we came to a wharf, and ridin' to the float below it was a big white launch, cabined and decked. Tad jumped down and the gang folleyed. Thin I lowered mesilf

down with dignity and intered the miserable engine room.

"I have run every sort of engine and machine made by experts and other ignoramuses. I balk at nothing. The engine was new to me, but I lit a lantern and examined its inwards with anxiety and superciliousness. Prisintly, by the grace of God, it started off. A very small bhoy held the lantern for me while I adjusted the valves and the carbureter, and this bould lad infor-rmed me with pride that the 'leader' had assigned him to me as my engine-room crew. And whin the machine was revolvin' with some speed that individal thrust his head in at the door to ask me if I was ready. 'If ye are,' says that limb of wickedness, 'we will start, chief.'

" 'Ye may start any time,' I says, with great respict. 'But whin we'll stop is another matther.'

" 'Ye must keep her goin' whiles we cross the bar,' he infor-rms me, with a straight look.

"The little gong rang and I threw in the clutch and felt the launch slide away. The jingle came and I opened her up. 'Twas a powerful machine and whin I felt the jerk and pull of her four cylinders I sint me assistant to find the the gasoline tank and see whether we had oil enough. Thinks I, if this machine eats up fuel like this we must e'en have enough and aplenty. The bhoy came back with smut on his nose and sthated that the tank was full.

" 'How do ye know?' I demanded.

"'I've helped the owner fill her up several times,' says the brat. 'The leader insists that we know the insides of every boat on the bay. 'Tis part of our practice, and whin we get to be scouts we will all run gasoline engines.'

"So we went along and the engines war-rmed up; and I trimmed the lantern and sat me down comfortable as a cat on a pan of dough. Thin there was a horrible rumpus on deck and some watther splashed down the back of me neck. 'Tis the bar,' says me proud engine-room crew, balancin' himsilf on the plates.

"'They are shovin' dhrinks across it too fast for me,' I retorts, as more watther simmers down.

"'Oh, the leader knows all the soft places,' he returns proudly, this bould sprig. And with a whoop we drove through a big felly that almost swamped us. Thin, as far as I cud judge, the worst was over.

"Prisintly we got into the trough of the sea and rowled along for an hour more. Then the jingle tinkled and I slowed down. Me bould Tad stuck his head in at the little door. 'The *Gladys* is right inshore from us,' he remarks, careless-like. 'We will signal her to up anchor and come with us.' He took me lantern and vanished.

"Whin I waited long enough for all the oil to have burned out of three lanterns I turned the engines over to me crew and stepped out on deck. It was a weepin' fog, with more rowlin' in all the time, and the feel on

me cheek was like that of a stor-rm. I saw me bould Tad on the little for'a'd deck, swingin' his little lamp.

"'What's the matther with that scut of a skipper?' I inquires.

"The boy was fair cryin' with rage and shame. 'He cannot undherstand the signal,' says he; 'and 'tis dangerous to run closer to him in this sea.'

"'If he don't understand yer signal,' says I, ''tis useless to talk more to him with yer ar-rms. Use yer tongue.'

"And at that he raised a squeal that cud be heard a hundred feet, the voice of him bein' but a bhoy's, without noise and power. 'Let be,' says I. 'I've talked me mind across the deep watthers many times.' And I filled me lungs and let out a blast that fetched everybody on deck on the other launch. Then I tould that skipper, with rage in me throat, that he must up anchor and folley us or be drownded with all his passengers dragging on his coattails through purgat'ry. And he listened, and prisintly we saw the *Gladys* creep through the darkness and fog up till us. When she crossed our stern me bould Tad tould me to command her to folley us into port.

"Ravin's and ragin's were nothin' to the language we traded across that watther for the five minutes necessary to knock loose the wits of that heathen mariner. In the end he saw the light, and the passengers that crowded his sloppy decks waved their arms and yelled with delight. Me bould Tad went

into the little pilot house and slammed the door. He spoke to me sharply. 'Twill blow a gale before midnight.' He rang the bell for full speed ahead.

"An hour later I was signaled to stop me machines. I dropped the clutch and sint me assistant for news. He came back with big eyes. 'The leader says the other launch can't make it across the bar,' he reports.

" 'Well,' I says.

" 'We're goin' to take off her passengers and cross it oursilves,' says the brat. With that he vanishes. I folleyed him.

"We were stopped right in the fog, with roily waves towerin' past us and the dull noise of the bar ahead of us. The *Gladys* was right astern of us, and even in the darkness I cud catch a glimpse of white faces and hear little screams of women. I went to leeward and there found me bould Tad launchin' the little dingy that was stowed on the roof of the cabin. Whin it was overside four of me bould gang drops into it and pulls away for the other launch. 'They'll be swamped and drownded,' I remar-rks.

" 'They will not,' says Tad. 'I trained thim mesilf. 'Tis child's play.'

" 'Childher play with queer toys in this counthry,' I continues to mesilf; and I had a pain in me pit to see thim careerin' on the big waves that looked nigh to breakin' any minute. But they came back with three women and a baby, with nothin' to say excipt: 'There's thirty-one of thim, leader!'

"I WENT TO LEEWARD AND THERE FOUND ME BOULD TAD LAUNCHIN' THE LITTLE DINGY"

"'Leave the min,' says he, real sharp. 'Tell the captain we'll come back for thim after we've landed the women safe.'

"I tucked the women down in the afther cabin, snug and warm, and wint back on deck. The boat was away again, swingin' over the seas as easy as a bird.

"'That's good boatmanship,' I remar-rks.

"'It's young Carson in command,' says me bould bhoy leader.

"'Twas fifteen minutes before the boat came back, and thin there was a man in it, with two women. Whin it swung alongside Tad helped out the ladies and thin pushed at the man with his foot. 'Back ye go!' he says. 'No room on this craft for min.'

"'But you're only a lot of bhoys!' says the man in a rage. 'Who are you to give orders? I'll come aboard.'

"'Ye will not,' says me bould Tad, and I reached into the engine room for a spanner whereby to back him up, for I admired the spunk of the young sprig. But the man stared into the lad's face and said nothin'. And the boat pulled away with him still starin' over his shouldher.

"The nixt boatload was all the rest of the womenfolks and childher and Tad ordered the dingy swung in and secured. Thin he tur-rned to me. 'We will go in.'

"'Which way?' I demands.

"He put his little hand to his ear. 'Hear it?' he

asks calmly. I listened and by the great Hivins there was a whistlin' buoy off in the darkness. I wint down to me machines.

"I've run me engines many a long night whin the devil was bruising his knuckles agin the plates beneath me. But the nixt hour made me tin years ouldher. For we hadn't more'n got well started in before it was 'Stop her!' and 'Full speed ahead!' and 'Ease her!' Me assistant was excited, but kept on spillin' oil into the cups and feelin' the bearin's like an ould hand. Once, whin the sea walloped over our little craft, he grinned across at me. 'There ain't many soft places to-night!' says he.

" 'Ye're a child of the Ould Nick,' says I, 'and eat fire out of an asbestos spoon.'

" ' 'Tis the scouts' law not to be afraid,' retor-rts me young demon. But me attintion was distracted be a tremenjous scamperin' overhead. 'For the love of mercy, what is that?' I yelled.

" ' 'Tis the leader puttin' out the drag,' says me crew. 'Whin the breakers are high it's safer to ride in with a drag over the stern. It keeps the boat from broachin' to.' And to the dot of his last word I felt the sudden, strong pull of something on the launch's tail. Thin something lifted us up and laid us down with a slap, like a pan of dough on a mouldin' board. Me machines coughed and raced and thin almost stopped. Whin they were goin' again I saw me assistant houldin' to a stanchion. His face was pasty

white and he gulped. 'Are ye scared at last?' I demanded of him.

"'I am seasick,' he chokes back. And he was, be Hivins!

"So we joggled and bobbled about and I wondhered how many times we had crossed the bar from ind to ind, whin suddenly it smoothed down and I saw a red light through the little windey. Me assistant saw it too. 'That's the range light off the jetty,' says he. 'We're inside.'

"I shoved open the door to the deck and looked out. The fog lay about us thick and the wind was risin'; I cud barely make out the lights ahead. I stuck me head out and glanced astern. 'Way back of us, like a match behind a curtain, I saw a little light bobbing up and down in the fog. I took me crew be the ear and thrust his head out beside mine. 'What is that?' I demanded.

"'''Tis the other launch,' he says. 'I guess they folleyed us in.'

"We ran up to the wharf and the gang made everything fast; and then me bould Tad comes to me with a sheepish face. 'Wud ye mind tellin' the ladies and childher that they can go ashore and get to the hotel?' he says.

"So it was me that wint in and tould the ladies they were saved and helped thim to the wharf and saw thim started for the hotel. Thin I came back to the launch, but there was nobody there. Me bould

gang had disappeared. Just thin the other launch came up, limpin' on one leg, covered with drippin' men and blasphemy. They didn't wait for the lines to be put out, but jumped for the float like rats out of biscuit barrels and swarmed for the hotel. Whiles I was watchin' thim the skipper of the *Gladys* pulls himself out of his wrecked pilot house and approaches me with heavy footfalls. 'I'm toold that 'twas bhoys that manned this launch,' he remar-rks. 'If it is so, I wudn't have come in and nearly lost me ship.'

" 'If it hadn't been for the bhoys ye'd now be drift-in' into the breakers off yer favorite fishin' spot,' I retor-rts. 'Nixt time ye try suicide leave the women and childher ashore.' And with the words out of me mouth the gale broke upon us like the blow of a fish.

"We took shelter behind a warehouse and the skipper of the 'Gladys' said in me ear: 'I suppose the owner of the launch had to get what crew he cud. Where is he? I'd like to thank him.'

" 'If ye will come with me to the hotel ye shall see the man ye owe life to,' I infor-rmed him.

"As we intered the hotel a tall man, with the mar-rk of aut'ority on him, observed me unifor-rm and addressed me: 'What do you know about this?'

"Aut'ority is always aut'ority, and I tould him what I knew and had seen, not forbearin' to mintion the gang and their wild ambitions. And whin I had finished this man said: 'I shall muster thim in to-morrow.

I happen to be in command of the scouts in this district.'

" 'But they haven't their dollars to put in the little bank,' I remarked. 'And they tell me without their dollar they cannot be second-class scouts, whativer that is.'

"At this a fat man reached for a hat off the hook and put his hand in his pocket, drew it out and emptied it into the hat, and passed it.

"And while the money jingled into it my respict for the brave lads rose into me mouth. 'They won't take it,' I said. 'They have refused money before. 'Tis their oath.'

"The man with aut'ority looked over at me. 'The chief is right,' he said. 'They have earned only a dollar apiece. Whose launch was that they took?'

" 'Faith and I don't know,' I said. 'They remarrked that the owner—Hivin bless him!—had niver forbidden thim to use it.'

" 'Thin we must pay the rint of it for the night,' says he. 'But the bhoys will get only a dollar apiece. Where are they?'

" 'They disappeared whin the boat was fast, sir,' says I. 'I think they wint home. 'Tis bedtime.'

" 'D'ye know where the patrol-leader lives?' he demands.

"So we walked up the hill in the darkness and wind till we reached the house of me bould Tad. A knock at the door brought the missus, with a towel on her

ar-rm. I pushed in. 'We've come to see yer son,' says I.

"We stepped in and saw the young sprig be the fire, on a chair, with his feet in a bowl of watther and musthard. He was for runnin' whin he saw us, but cudn't for the lack of clothes. So he scowled at us. 'This is the commander of the scouts,' I says, inthroducin' me tall companion. 'And here's yer five dollars to put with yer dollar and six bits into the little bank, so's yez can all of yez be second-class scouts.'

" 'We can't take the money,' says he, with a terrible growl. 'The oath forbids us to take money for savin' life.'

" 'Don't be a hero,' I rebukes him. 'Ye're only a small bhoy in his undherclothes with yer feet in hot watther and musthard. No hero was ever in such a predicament. This gintleman will infor-rm ye about the money.'

"Me bould companion looked at the slip of a lad and said sharply: 'Report to me to-morrow morning with yer patrol at sivin o'clock to be musthered in.'

"With that we mar-rched out into the stor-rm and back to the hotel, where I wint to slape like a bhoy mesilf—me that was sixty-four me last birthday and niver thought to make a fool of mesilf with a gang of bhoys and a gasoline engine—and that on a holiday!"

IV.—The Red-Headed League

By Arthur Conan Doyle

I HAD called upon my friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, one day in the autumn of last year, and found him in deep conversation with a very stout, florid-faced elderly gentleman, with fiery red hair. With an apology for my intrusion, I was about to withdraw, when Holmes pulled me abruptly into the room and closed the door behind me.

"You could not possibly have come at a better time, my dear Watson," he said, cordially.

"I was afraid that you were engaged."

"So I am. Very much so."

"Then I can wait in the next room."

"Not at all. This gentleman, Mr. Wilson, has been my partner and helper in many of my most success-

ful cases, and I have no doubt that he will be of the utmost use to me in yours also."

The stout gentleman half rose from his chair and gave a bob of greeting, with a quick little questioning glance from his small, fat-encircled eyes.

"Try the settee," said Holmes, relapsing into his arm-chair, and putting his finger-tips together, as was his custom when in judicial moods. "I know, my dear Watson, that you share my love of all that is bizarre and outside the conventions and humdrum routine of everyday life. You have shown your relish for it by the enthusiasm which has prompted you to chronicle, and, if you will excuse my saying so, somewhat to embellish so many of my own little adventures."

"Your cases have indeed been of the greatest interest to me," I observed.

"You will remember that I remarked the other day, just before we went into the very simple problem presented by Miss Mary Sutherland, that for strange effects and extraordinary combinations we must go to life itself, which is always far more daring than any effort of the imagination."

"A proposition which I took the liberty of doubting."

"You did, doctor, but none the less you must come round to my view, for otherwise I shall keep on piling fact upon fact on you, until your reason breaks down under them and acknowledges me to be right. Now, Mr. Jabez Wilson here has been good enough to call

upon me this morning, and to begin a narrative which promises to be one of the most singular which I have listened to for some time. You have heard me remark that the strangest and most unique things are very often connected not with the larger but with the smaller crimes, and occasionally, indeed, where there is room for doubt whether any positive crime has been committed. As far as I have heard, it is impossible for me to say whether the present case is an instance of crime or not, but the course of events is certainly among the most singular that I have ever listened to. Perhaps, Mr. Wilson, you would have the great kindness to recommence your narrative. I ask you, not merely because my friend, Dr. Watson, has not heard the opening part, but also because the peculiar nature of the story makes me anxious to have every possible detail from your lips. As a rule, when I have heard some slight indication of the course of events I am able to guide myself by the thousands of other similar cases which occur to my memory. In the present instance I am forced to admit that the facts are, to the best of my belief, unique."

The portly client puffed out his chest with an appearance of some little pride, and pulled a dirty and wrinkled newspaper from the inside pocket of his greatcoat. As he glanced down the advertisement column, with his head thrust forward, and the paper flattened out upon his knee, I took a good look at the man, and endeavored, after the fashion of my companion,

to read the indications which might be presented by his dress or appearance.

I did not gain very much, however, by my inspection. Our visitor bore every mark of being an average commonplace British tradesman, obese, pompous, and slow. He wore rather baggy gray shepherd's check trousers, a not over-clean black frock-coat, unbuttoned in the front, and a drab waistcoat with a heavy brassy Albert chain, and a square pierced bit of metal dangling down as an ornament. A frayed top hat and a faded brown overcoat with a wrinkled velvet collar lay upon a chair beside him. Altogether, look as I would, there was nothing remarkable about the man save his blazing red head and the expression of extreme chagrin and discontent upon his features.

Sherlock Holmes' quick eye took in my occupation, and he shook his head with a smile as he noticed my questioning glances. "Beyond the obvious facts that he has at some time done manual labor, that he takes snuff, that he is a Freemason, that he has been in China, and that he has done a considerable amount of writing lately, I can deduce nothing else."

Mr. Jabez Wilson started up in his chair, with his forefinger upon the paper, but his eyes upon my companion.

"How, in the name of good fortune, did you know all that, Mr. Holmes?" he asked. "How did you know, for example, that I did manual labor? It's as true as gospel, for I began as a ship's carpenter."

"Your hands, my dear sir. You right hand is quite a size larger than your left. You have worked with it and the muscles are more developed."

"Well, the snuff, then, and the Freemasonry?"

"I won't insult your intelligence by telling you how I read that, especially as, rather against the strict rules of your order, you use an arc and compass breastpin."

"Ah, of course, I forgot that. But the writing?"

"What else can be indicated by that right cuff so very shiny for five inches, and the left one with the smooth patch near the elbow where you rest it upon the desk."

"Well, but China?"

"The fish which you have tattooed immediately above your wrist could only have been done in China. I have made a small study of tattoo marks, and have even contributed to the literature of the subject. That trick of staining the fishes' scales of a delicate pink is quite peculiar to China. When, in addition, I see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch-chain, the matter becomes even more simple."

Mr. Jabez Wilson laughed heavily. "Well, I never!" said he. "I thought at first that you had done something clever, but I see that there was nothing in it after all."

"I begin to think, Watson," said Holmes, "that I make a mistake in explaining. *'Omne ignotum pro magnifico,'* you know, and my poor little reputation,

such as it is, will suffer shipwreck if I am so candid. Can you not find the advertisement, Mr. Wilson?"

"Yes, I have got it now," he answered, with his thick, red finger planted half-way down the column. "Here it is. This is what began it all. You just read it for yourself, sir."

I took the paper from him and read as follows:

"To the Red-headed League: On account of the bequest of the late Ezekiah Hopkins, of Lebanon, Pa., U. S. A., there is now another vacancy open which entitles a member of the League to a salary of four pounds a week for purely nominal services. All red-headed men who are sound in body and mind and above the age of twenty-one years are eligible. Apply in person on Monday, at eleven o'clock, to Duncan Ross, at the offices of the League, 7 Pope's Court, Fleet Street."

"What on earth does this mean?" I ejaculated, after I had twice read over the extraordinary announcement.

Holmes chuckled and wriggled in his chair, as was his habit when in high spirits. "It is a little off the beaten track, isn't it?" said he. "And now, Mr. Wilson, off you go at scratch, and tell us all about yourself, your household, and the effect which this advertisement had upon your fortunes. You will first make a note, doctor, of the paper and the date."

"It is *The Morning Chronicle* of April 27, 1890. Just two months ago."

"Very good. Now, Mr. Wilson."

"Well, it is just as I have been telling you, Mr. Sherlock Holmes," said Jabez Wilson, mopping his forehead, "I have a small pawnbroker's business at Coburg Square, near the City. It's not a very large affair, and of late years it has not done more than just give me a living. I used to be able to keep two assistants, but now I only keep one; and I would have a job to pay him but that he is willing to come for half wages, so as to learn the business."

"What is the name of this obliging youth?" asked Sherlock Holmes.

"His name is Vincent Spaulding, and he's not such a youth either. It's hard to say his age. I should not wish a smarter assistant, Mr. Holmes; and I know very well that he could better himself, and earn twice what I am able to give him. But, after all, if he is satisfied, why should I put ideas in his head?"

"Why, indeed? You seem most fortunate in having an employee who comes under the full market price. It is not a common experience among employers in this age. I don't know that your assistant is not as remarkable as your advertisement."

"Oh, he has his faults, too," said Mr. Wilson. "Never was such a fellow for photography. Snapping away with a camera when he ought to be improving his mind, and then diving down into the cellar like a rabbit into its hole to develop his pictures. That is his main fault; but, on the whole, he's a good worker. There's no vice in him."

"He is still with you, I presume?"

"Yes, sir. He and a girl of fourteen, who does a bit of simple cooking, and keeps the place clean—that's all I have in the house, for I am a widower, and never had any family. We live very quietly, sir, the three of us; and we keep a roof over our heads, and pay our debts, if we do nothing more.

"The first thing that put us out was that advertisement. Spaulding, he came down into the office just this day eight weeks, with this very paper in his hand, and he says:

" 'I wish to the Lord, Mr. Wilson, that I was a red-headed man.'

" 'Why that?' I asks.

" 'Why,' says he, 'here's another vacancy on the League of the Red-headed Men. It's worth quite a little fortune to any man who gets it, and I understand that there are more vacancies than there are men, so that the trustees are at their wit's end what to do with the money. If my hair would only change color here's a nice little crib all ready for me to step into.'

" 'Why, what is it, then?' I asked. You see, Mr. Holmes, I am a very stay-at-home man, and, as my business came to me instead of my having to go to it, I was often weeks on end without putting my foot over the door-mat. In that way I didn't know much of what was going on outside, and I was always glad of a bit of news.

"'Have you never heard of the League of the Red-headed Men?' he asked, with his eyes open.

"'Never.'

"'Why, I wonder at that, for you are eligible yourself for one of the vacancies.'

"'And what are they worth?' I asked.

"'Oh, merely a couple of hundred a year, but the work is slight, and it need not interfere very much with one's other occupations.'

"Well, you can easily think that that made me prick up my ears, for the business has not been over good for some years, and an extra couple of hundred would have been very handy.

"'Tell me all about it,' said I.

"'Well,' said he, showing me the advertisement, 'you can see for yourself that the League has a vacancy, and there is the address where you should apply for particulars. As far as I can make out, the League was founded by an American millionaire, Ezekiah Hopkins, who was very peculiar in his ways. He was himself red-headed, and he had a great sympathy for all red-headed men; so, when he died, it was found that he had left his enormous fortune in the hands of trustees, with instructions to apply the interest to the providing of easy berths to men whose hair is of that color. From all I hear it is splendid pay, and very little to do.'

"'But,' said I, 'there would be millions of red-headed men who would apply.'

"'Not so many as you might think,' he answered. 'You see it is really confined to Londoners, and to grown men. This American had started from London when he was young, and he wanted to do the old town a good turn. Then, again, I have heard it is no use your applying if your hair is light red, or dark red, or anything but real, bright, blazing fiery red. Now, if you cared to apply, Mr. Wilson, you would just walk in; but perhaps it would hardly be worth your while to put yourself out of the way for the sake of a few hundred pounds.'

"Now it is a fact, gentlemen, as you may see for yourselves, that my hair is of a very full and rich tint, so that it seemed to me that, if there was to be any competition in the matter, I stood as good a chance as any man that I had ever met. Vincent Spaulding seemed to know so much about it that I thought he might prove useful, so I just ordered him to put up the shutters for the day, and to come right away with me. He was very willing to have a holiday, so we shut the business up, and started off for the address that was given us in the advertisement.

"I never hope to see such a sight as that again, Mr. Holmes. From north, south, east, and west every man who had a shade of red in his hair had tramped into the City to answer the advertisement. Fleet Street was choked with red-headed folk, and Pope's Court looked like a coster's orange barrow. I should not have thought there were so many in the whole

country as were brought together by that single advertisement. Every shade of color they were—straw, lemon, orange, brick, Irish-setter, liver, clay; but, as Spaulding said, there were not many who had the real vivid flame-colored tint. When I saw how many were waiting, I would have given it up in despair; but Spaulding would not hear of it. How he did it I could not imagine, but he pushed and pulled and butted until he got me through the crowd, and right up to the steps which led to the office. There was a double stream upon the stair, some going up in hope, and some coming back dejected; but we wedged in as well as we could, and soon found ourselves in the office."

"Your experience has been a most entertaining one," remarked Holmes, as his client paused and refreshed his memory with a huge pinch of snuff. "Pray continue your very interesting statement."

"There was nothing in the office but a couple of wooden chairs and a deal table, behind which sat a small man, with a head that was even redder than mine. He said a few words to each candidate as he came up, and then he always managed to find some fault in them which would disqualify them. Getting a vacancy did not seem to be such a very easy matter after all. However, when our turn came, the little man was much more favorable to me than to any of the others, and he closed the door as we entered, so that he might have a private word with us.

"'This is Mr. Jabez Wilson,' said my assistant, 'and he is willing to fill a vacancy in the League.'

"'And he is admirably suited for it,' the other answered. 'He has every requirement. I cannot recall when I have seen anything so fine.' He took a step backward, cocked his head on one side, and gazed at my hair until I felt quite bashful. Then suddenly he plunged forward, wrung my hand, and congratulated me warmly on my success.

"'It would be injustice to hesitate,' said he. 'You will, however, I am sure, excuse me for taking an obvious precaution.' With that he seized my hair in both his hands, and tugged until I yelled with the pain. 'There is water in your eyes,' said he, as he released me. 'I perceive that all is as it should be. But we have to be careful, for we have twice been deceived by wigs and once by paint. I could tell you tales of cobbler's wax which would disgust you with human nature.' He stepped over to the window and shouted through it at the top of his voice that the vacancy was filled. A groan of disappointment came up from below, and the folk all trooped away in different directions, until there was not a red head to be seen except my own and that of the manager.

"'My name,' said he, 'is Mr. Duncan Ross, and I am myself one of the pensioners upon the fund left by our noble benefactor. Are you a married man, Mr. Wilson? Have you a family?'

"I answered that I had not.

"His face fell immediately.

"'Dear me!' he said, gravely, 'that is very serious indeed! I am sorry to hear you say that. The fund was, of course, for the propagation and spread of the red-heads as well as for their maintenance. It is exceedingly unfortunate that you should be a bachelor.'

"My face lengthened at this, Mr. Holmes, for I thought that I was not to have the vacancy after all; but, after thinking it over for a few minutes, he said that it would be all right.

"'In the case of another,' said he, 'the objection might be fatal, but we must stretch a point in favor of a man with such a head of hair as yours. When shall you be able to enter upon your new duties?'

"'Well, it is a little awkward, for I have a business already,' said I.

"'Oh, never mind about that, Mr. Wilson!' said Vincent Spaulding. 'I shall be able to look after that for you.'

"'What would be the hours?' I asked.

"'Ten to two.'

"Now a pawnbroker's business is mostly done of an evening, Mr. Holmes, especially Thursday and Friday evenings, which is just before pay-day; so it would suit me very well to earn a little in the mornings. Besides, I knew that my assistant was a good man, and that he would see to anything that turned up.

"'That would suit me very well,' said I. 'And the pay?'

"'Is four pounds a week.'

"'And the work?'

"'Is purely nominal.'

"'What do you call purely nominal?'

"'Well, you have to be in the office, or at least in the building, the whole time. If you leave, you forfeit your whole position forever. The will is very clear upon that point. You don't comply with the conditions if you budge from the office during that time.'

"'It's only four hours a day, and I should not think of leaving,' said I.

"'No excuse will avail,' said Mr. Duncan Ross, 'neither sickness, nor business, nor anything else. There you must stay, or you lose your billet.'

"'And the work?'

"'Is to copy out the "Encyclopædia Britannica." There is the first volume of it in that press. You must find your own ink, pens, and blotting-paper, but we provide this table and chair. Will you be ready to-morrow?'

"'Certainly,' I answered.

"'Then, good-by, Mr. Jabez Wilson, and let me congratulate you once more on the important position which you have been fortunate enough to gain.' He bowed me out of the room, and I went home with my assistant hardly knowing what to say or do, I was so pleased at my own good fortune.

"Well, I thought over the matter all day, and by

evening I was in low spirits again; for I had quite persuaded myself that the whole affair must be some great hoax or fraud, though what its object might be I could not imagine. It seemed altogether past belief that any one could make such a will, or that they would pay such a sum for doing anything so simple as copying out the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' Vincent Spaulding did what he could to cheer me up, but by bed-time I had reasoned myself out of the whole thing. However, in the morning I determined to have a look at it anyhow, so I bought a penny bottle of ink, and with a quill pen and seven sheets of foolscap paper I started off for Pope's Court.

"Well, to my surprise and delight everything was as right as possible. The table was set out ready for me, and Mr. Duncan Ross was there to see that I got fairly to work. He started me off upon the letter A, and then he left me; but he would drop in from time to time to see that all was right with me. At two o'clock he bade me good-day, complimented me upon the amount that I had written, and locked the door of the office after me.

"This went on day after day, Mr. Holmes, and on Saturday the manager came in and planked down four golden sovereigns for my week's work. It was the same next week, and the same the week after. Every morning I was there at ten, and every afternoon I left at two. By degrees Mr. Duncan Ross took to coming in only once of a morning, and then, after a

time, he did not come in at all. Still, of course, I never dared to leave the room for an instant, for I was not sure when he might come, and the billet was such a good one, and suited me so well, that I would not risk the loss of it.

"Eight weeks passed away like this, and I had written about Abbots, and Archery, and Armor, and Architecture, and Attica, and hoped with diligence that I might get on to the B's before very long. It cost me something in foolscap, and I had pretty nearly filled a shelf with my writings. And then suddenly the whole business came to an end."

"To an end?"

"Yes, sir. And no later than this morning. I went to my work as usual at ten o'clock, but the door was shut and locked, with a little square of cardboard hammered onto the middle of the panel with a tack. Here it is, and you can read for yourself."

He held up a piece of white cardboard, about the size of a sheet of note-paper. It read in this fashion:

"THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE IS DISSOLVED.
Oct. 9, 1890."

Sherlock Holmes and I surveyed this curt announcement and the rueful face behind it, until the comical side of the affair so completely overtopped every consideration that we both burst out into a roar of laughter.

"I cannot see that there is anything very funny," cried our client, flushing up to the roots of his flaming head. "If you can do nothing better than laugh at me, I can go elsewhere."

"No, no," cried Holmes, shoving him back into the chair from which he had half risen. "I really wouldn't miss your case for the world. It is most refreshingly unusual. But there is, if you will excuse my saying so, something just a little funny about it. Pray what steps did you take when you found the card upon the door?"

"I was staggered, sir. I did not know what to do. Then I called at the offices round, but none of them seemed to know anything about it. Finally, I went to the landlord, who is an accountant living on the ground floor, and I asked him if he could tell me what had become of the Red-headed League. He said that he had never heard of any such body. Then I asked him who Mr. Duncan Ross was. He answered that the name was new to him.

" 'Well,' said I, 'the gentleman at No. 4.'

" 'What, the red-headed man?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Oh,' said he, 'his name was William Morris. He was a solicitor, and was using my room as a temporary convenience until his new premises were ready. He moved out yesterday.'

" 'Where could I find him?'

" 'Oh, at his new offices. He did tell me the ad-

dress. Yes, 17 King Edward Street, near St. Paul's.'

"I started off, Mr. Holmes, but when I got to that address it was a manufactory of artificial knee-caps, and no one in it had ever heard of either Mr. William Morris or Mr. Duncan Ross.'

"And what did you do then?" asked Holmes.

"I went home to Saxe-Coburg Square, and I took the advice of my assistant. But he could not help me in any way. He could only say that if I waited I should hear by post. But that was not quite good enough, Mr. Holmes. I did not wish to lose such a place without a struggle, so, as I had heard that you were good enough to give advice to poor folk who were in need of it, I came right away to you."

"And you did very wisely," said Holmes. "Your case is an exceedingly remarkable one, and I shall be happy to look into it. From what you have told me I think that it is possible that graver issues hang from it than might at first sight appear."

"Grave enough!" said Mr. Jabez Wilson. "Why, I have lost four pound a week."

"As far as you are personally concerned," remarked Holmes, "I do not see that you have any grievance against this extraordinary league. On the contrary, you are, as I understand, richer by some thirty pounds, to say nothing of the minute knowledge which you have gained on every subject which comes under the letter A. You have lost nothing by them."

"No, sir. But I want to find out about them, and

who they are, and what their object was in playing this prank—if it was a prank—upon me. It was a pretty expensive joke for them, for it cost them two-and-thirty pounds."

"We shall endeavor to clear up these points for you. And, first, one or two questions, Mr. Wilson. This assistant of yours who first called your attention to the advertisement—how long had he been with you?"

"About a month then."

"How did he come?"

"In answer to an advertisement."

"Was he the only applicant?"

"No, I had a dozen."

"Why did you pick him?"

"Because he was handy and would come cheap."

"At half wages, in fact."

"Yes."

"What is he like, this Vincent Spaulding?"

"Small, stout-built, very quick in his ways, no hair on his face, though he's not short of thirty. Has a white splash of acid upon his forehead."

Holmes sat up in his chair in considerable excitement. "I thought as much," said he. "Have you ever observed that his ears are pierced for earrings?"

"Yes, sir. He told me that a gypsy had done it for him when he was a lad."

"Hum!" said Holmes, sinking back in deep thought. "He is still with you?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I have only just left him."

"And has your business been attended to in your absence?"

"Nothing to complain of, sir. There's never very much to do of a morning."

"That will do, Mr. Wilson. I shall be happy to give you an opinion upon the subject in the course of a day or two. To-day is Saturday, and I hope that by Monday we may come to a conclusion.

"Well, Watson," said Holmes, when our visitor had left us, "what do you make of it all?"

"I make nothing of it," I answered, frankly. "It is a most mysterious business."

"As a rule," said Holmes, "the more bizarre a thing is the less mysterious it proves to be. It is your commonplace, featureless crimes which are really puzzling, just as a commonplace face is the most difficult to identify. But I must be prompt over this matter."

"What are you going to do, then?" I asked.

"To smoke," he answered. "It is quite a three-pipe problem, and I beg that you won't speak to me for fifty minutes." He curled himself up in his chair, with his thin knees drawn up to his hawk-like nose, and there he sat with his eyes closed and his black clay pipe thrusting out like the bill of some strange bird. I had come to the conclusion that he had dropped asleep, and indeed was nodding myself, when he suddenly sprang out of his chair with the gesture of a man who has made up his mind, and put his pipe down upon the mantelpiece.

"Sarasate plays at St. James' Hall this afternoon," he remarked. "What do you think, Watson? Could your patients spare you for a few hours?"

"I have nothing to do to-day. My practice is never very absorbing."

"Then put on your hat and come. I am going through the city first, and we can have some lunch on the way. I observe that there is a good deal of German music on the programme, which is rather more to my taste than Italian or French. It is introspective, and I want to introspect. Come along!"

We traveled by the Underground as far as Aldersgate; and a short walk took us to Saxe-Coburg Square, the scene of the singular story which we had listened to in the morning. It was a poky, little, shabby-genteel place, where four lines of dingy, two-storied brick houses looked out into a small railed-in inclosure, where a lawn of weedy grass and a few clumps of faded laurel bushes made a hard fight against a smoke-laden and uncongenial atmosphere. Three gilt balls and a brown board with JABEZ WILSON in white letters, upon a corner house, announced the place where our red-headed client carried on his business. Sherlock Holmes stopped in front of it with his head on one side, and looked it all over, with his eyes shining brightly between puckered lids. Then he walked slowly up the street, and then down again to the corner, still looking keenly at the houses. Finally he returned to the pawnbroker's and, having thumped vig-

orously upon the pavement with his stick two or three times, he went up to the door and knocked. It was instantly opened by a bright-looking, clean-shaven young fellow, who asked him to step in.

"Thank you," said Holmes, "I only wished to ask you how you would go from here to the Strand."

"Third right, fourth left," answered the assistant, promptly, closing the door.

"Smart fellow, that," observed Holmes as we walked away. "He is, in my judgment, the fourth smartest man in London, and for daring I am not sure that he has not a claim to be third. I have known something of him before."

"Evidently," said I, "Mr. Wilson's assistant counts for a good deal in this mystery of the Red-headed League. I am sure that you inquired your way merely in order that you might see him."

"Not him."

"What then?"

"The knees of his trousers."

"And what did you see?"

"What I expected to see."

"Why did you beat the pavement?"

"My dear doctor, this is a time for observation, not for talk. We are spies in an enemy's country. We know something of Saxe-Coburg Square. Let us now explore the parts which lie behind it."

The road in which we found ourselves as we turned round the corner from the retired Saxe-Coburg

Square presented as great a contrast to it as the front of a picture does to the back. It was one of the main arteries which convey the traffic of the city to the north and west. The roadway was blocked with the immense stream of commerce flowing in a double tide inward and outward, while the footpaths were black with the hurrying swarm of pedestrians. It was difficult to realize, as we looked at the line of fine shops and stately business premises, that they really abutted on the other side upon the faded and stagnant square which we had just quitted.

"Let me see," said Holmes, standing at the corner, and glancing along the line, "I should like just to remember the order of the houses here. It is a hobby of mine to have an exact knowledge of London. There is Mortimer's, the tobacconist; the little newspaper shop, the Coburg branch of the City and Suburban Bank, the Vegetarian Restaurant, and McFarlane's carriage-building depot. That carries us right on to the other block. And now, doctor, we've done our work, so it's time we had some play. A sandwich and a cup of coffee, and then off to violin-land, where all is sweetness, and delicacy, and harmony, and there are no red-headed clients to vex us with their conundrums."

My friend was an enthusiastic musician, being himself not only a very capable performer, but a composer of no ordinary merit. All the afternoon he sat in the stalls wrapped in the most perfect happi-

ness, gently waving his long thin fingers in time to the music, while his gently smiling face and his languid, dreamy eyes were as unlike those of Holmes the sleuth-hound, Holmes the relentless, keen-witted, ready-handed criminal agent, as it was possible to conceive. In his singular character the dual nature alternately asserted itself, and his extreme exactness and astuteness represented, as I have often thought, the reaction against the poetic and contemplative mood which occasionally predominated in him. The swing of his nature took him from extreme languor to devouring energy; and, as I knew well, he was never so truly formidable as when, for days on end, he had been lounging in his armchair amid his improvisations and his black-letter editions. Then it was that the lust of the chase would suddenly come upon him, and that his brilliant reasoning power would rise to the level of intuition, until those who were unacquainted with his methods would look askance at him as on a man whose knowledge was not that of other mortals. When I saw him that afternoon so enwrapped in the music at St. James' Hall, I felt that an evil time might be coming upon those whom he had set himself to hunt down.

"You want to go home, no doubt, doctor," he remarked, as we emerged.

"Yes, it would be as well."

"And I have some business to do which will take

some hours. This business at Saxe-Coburg Square is serious."

"Why serious?"

"A considerable crime is in contemplation. I have every reason to believe that we shall be in time to stop it. But to-day being Saturday rather complicates matters. I shall want your help to-night."

"At what time?"

"Ten will be early enough."

"I shall be at Baker Street at ten."

"Very well. And, I say, doctor! there may be some little danger, so kindly put your army revolver in your pocket." He waved his hand, turned on his heel, and disappeared in an instant among the crowd.

I trust that I am not more dense than my neighbors, but I was always oppressed with a sense of my own stupidity in my dealings with Sherlock Holmes. He and I had heard what he had heard, I had seen what he had seen, and yet from his words it was evident that he saw clearly not only what had happened, but what was about to happen, while to me the whole business was still confused and grotesque. As I drove home to my house in Kensington I thought over it all, from the extraordinary story of the red-headed copier of the "Encyclopædia" down to the visit to Saxe-Coburg Square, and the ominous words with which he had parted from me. What was this nocturnal expedition, and why should I go armed? Where were we going, and what were we to do? I

had the hint from Holmes that this smooth-faced pawnbroker's assistant was a formidable man—a man who might play a deep game. I tried to puzzle it out but gave it up in despair, and set the matter aside until night should bring an explanation.

It was a quarter-past nine when I started from home and made my way across the Park, and so through Oxford Street to Baker Street. Two hansoms were standing at the door, and, as I entered the passage, I heard the sound of voices from above. On entering his room, I found Holmes in animated conversation with two men, one of whom I recognized as Peter Jones, the official police agent; while the other was a long, thin, sad-faced man, with a very shiny hat and oppressively respectable frock-coat.

"Ha! our party is complete," said Holmes, buttoning up his pea-jacket, and taking his heavy hunting coat from the rack. "Watson, I think you know Mr. Jones of Scotland Yard? Let me introduce you to Mr. Merryweather, who is to be our companion in to-night's adventure."

"We're hunting in couples again, doctor, you see," said Jones, in his consequential way. "Our friend here is a wonderful man for starting a chase. All he wants is an old dog to help him do the running down."

"I hope a wild goose may not prove to be the end of our chase," observed Mr. Merryweather, gloomily.

"You may place considerable confidence in Mr.

Holmes, sir," said the police agent, loftily. "He has his own little methods, which are, if he won't mind my saying so, just a little too theoretical and fantastic, but he has the makings of a detective in him. It is not too much to say that once or twice, as in that business of the Sholto murder and the Agra treasure, he has been more nearly correct than the official force."

"Oh, if you say so, Mr. Jones, it is all right!" said the stranger, with deference. "Still, I confess that I miss my rubber. It is the first Saturday night for seven-and-twenty years that I have not had my rubber."

"I think you will find," said Sherlock Holmes, "that you will play for a higher stake to-night than you have ever done yet, and that the play will be more exciting. For you, Mr. Merryweather, the stake will be some thirty thousand pounds; and for you, Jones, it will be the man upon whom you wish to lay your hands."

"John Clay, the murderer, thief, smasher, and forger. He's a young man, Mr. Merryweather, but he is at the head of his profession, and I would rather have my bracelets on him than on any criminal in London. He's a remarkable man, is young John Clay. His grandfather was a Royal Duke, and he himself has been to Eton and Oxford. His brain is as cunning as his fingers, and though we meet signs of him at every turn, we never know where to find

the man himself. He'll crack a crib in Scotland one week, and be raising money to build an orphanage in Cornwall the next. I've been on his track for years, and have never set eyes on him yet."

"I hope that I may have the pleasure of introducing you to-night. I've had one or two little turns also with Mr. John Clay, and I agree with you that he is at the head of his profession. It is past ten, however, and quite time that we started. If you two will take the first hansom, Watson and I will follow in the second."

Sherlock Holmes was not very communicative during the long drive, and lay back in the cab humming the tunes which he had heard in the afternoon. We rattled through an endless labyrinth of gas-lit streets until we emerged into Farringdon Street.

"We are close there now," my friend remarked. "This fellow Merryweather is a bank director and personally interested in the matter. I thought it as well to have Jones with us also. He is not a bad fellow, though an absolute imbecile in his profession. He has one positive virtue. He is as brave as a bulldog, and as tenacious as a lobster if he gets his claws upon any one. Here we are, and they are waiting for us."

We had reached the same crowded thoroughfare in which we had found ourselves in the morning. Our cabs were dismissed, and following the guidance of Mr. Merryweather, we passed down a narrow passage,

and through a side door which he opened for us. Within there was a small corridor, which ended in a very massive iron gate. This also was opened, and led down a flight of winding stone steps, which terminated at another formidable gate. Mr. Merryweather stopped to light a lantern, and then conducted us down a dark, earth-smelling passage, and so, after opening a third door, into a huge vault or cellar, which was piled all round with crates and massive boxes.

"You are not very vulnerable from above," Holmes remarked, as he held up the lantern and gazed about him.

"Nor from below," said Mr. Merryweather, striking his stick upon the flags which lined the floor. "Why, dear me, it sounds quite hollow!" he remarked, looking up in surprise.

"I must really ask you to be a little more quiet," said Holmes, severely. "You have already imperiled the whole success of our expedition. Might I beg that you would have the goodness to sit down upon one of those boxes, and not to interfere?"

The solemn Mr. Merryweather perched himself upon a crate, with a very injured expression upon his face, while Holmes fell upon his knees upon the floor, and, with the lantern and a magnifying lens, began to examine minutely the cracks between the stones. A few seconds sufficed to satisfy him, for he sprang to his feet again, and put his glass in his pocket.

"We have at least an hour before us," he remarked, "for they can hardly take any steps until the good pawnbroker is safely in bed. Then they will not lose a minute, for the sooner they do their work the longer time they will have for their escape. We are at present, doctor—as no doubt you have divined—in the cellar of the city branch of one of the principal London banks. Mr. Merryweather is the chairman of directors, and he will explain to you that there are reasons why the more daring criminals of London should take a considerable interest in this cellar at present."

"It is our French gold," whispered the director. "We have had several warnings that an attempt might be made upon it."

"Your French gold?"

"Yes. We had occasion some months ago to strengthen our resources, and borrowed, for that purpose, thirty thousand napoleons from the Bank of France. It has become known that we have never had occasion to unpack the money, and that it is still lying in our cellar. The crate upon which I sit contains two thousand napoleons packed between layers of lead foil. Our reserve of bullion is much larger at present than is usually kept in a single branch office, and the directors have had misgivings upon the subject."

"Which were very well justified," observed Holmes. "And now it is time that we arranged our little plans. I expect that within an hour matters will come to a

head. In the meantime, Mr. Merryweather, we must put the screen over that dark lantern."

"And sit in the dark?"

"I am afraid so. I had brought a pack of cards in my pocket, and I thought that, as we were a *partie carrée*, you might have your rubber after all. But I see that the enemy's preparations have gone so far that we cannot risk the presence of a light. And, first of all, we must choose our positions. These are daring men, and, though we shall take them at a disadvantage, they may do us some harm, unless we are careful. I shall stand behind this crate, and do you conceal yourself behind those. Then, when I flash a light upon them, close in swiftly. If they fire, Watson, have no compunction about shooting them down."

I placed my revolver, cocked, upon the top of the wooden case behind which I crouched. Holmes shot the slide across the front of his lantern, and left us in pitch darkness—such an absolute darkness as I have never before experienced. The smell of hot metal remained to assure us that the light was still there, ready to flash out at a moment's notice. To me, with my nerves worked up to a pitch of expectancy, there was something depressing and subduing in the sudden gloom, and in the cold, dank air of the vault.

"They have but one retreat," whispered Holmes. "That is back through the house into Saxe-Coburg Square. I hope that you have done what I asked you, Jones?"

"I have an inspector and two officers waiting at the front door."

"Then we have stopped all the holes. And now we must be silent and wait."

What a time it seemed! From comparing notes afterwards, it was but an hour and a quarter, yet it appeared to me that the night must have almost gone, and the dawn be breaking above us. My limbs were weary and stiff, for I feared to change my position, yet my nerves were worked up to the highest pitch of tension, and my hearing was so acute that I could not only hear the gentle breathing of my companions, but I could distinguish the deeper, heavier inbreath of the bulky Jones from the thin, sighing note of the bank director. From my position I could look over the case in the direction of the floor. Suddenly my eyes caught the glint of a light.

At first it was but a lurid spark upon the stone pavement. Then it lengthened out until it became a yellow line, and then, without any warning or sound, a gash seemed to open and a hand appeared, a white, almost womanly hand, which felt about in the center of the little area of light. For a minute or more the hand, with its writhing fingers, protruded out of the floor. Then it was withdrawn as suddenly as it appeared, and all was dark again save the single lurid spark, which marked a chink between the stones.

Its disappearance, however, was but momentary. With a rending, tearing sound, one of the broad white

stones turned over upon its side, and left a square, gaping hole, through which streamed the light of a lantern. Over the edge there peeped a clean-cut, boyish face, which looked keenly about it, and then, with a hand on either side of the aperture, drew itself shoulder-high and waist-high, until one knee rested upon the edge. In another instant he stood at the side of the hole, and was hauling after him a companion, lithe and small like himself, with a pale face and a shock of very red hair.

"It's all clear," he whispered. "Have you the chisel and the bags? Great Scott! Jump, Archie, jump, and I'll swing for it!"

Sherlock Holmes had sprung out and seized the intruder by the collar. The other dived down the hole, and I heard the sound of rending cloth as Jones clutched at his skirts. The light flashed upon the barrel of a revolver, but Holmes' hunting crop came down on the man's wrist, and the pistol clinked upon the stone floor.

"It's no use, John Clay," said Holmes, blandly, "you have no chance at all."

"So I see," the other answered, with the utmost coolness. "I fancy that my pal is all right, though I see you have got his coat-tails."

"There are three men waiting for him at the door," said Holmes.

"Oh, indeed. You seem to have done the thing very completely. I must compliment you."

"And I you," Holmes answered. "Your red-headed idea was very new and effective."

"You'll see your pal again presently," said Jones. "He's quicker at climbing down holes than I am. Just hold out while I fix the derbies."

"I beg that you will not touch me with your filthy hands," remarked our prisoner, as the handcuffs clattered upon his wrists. "You may not be aware that I have royal blood in my veins. Have the goodness also, when you address me, always to say 'sir' and 'please.'"

"All right," said Jones, with a stare and a snigger. "Well, would you please, sir, march upstairs where we can get a cab to carry your highness to the police station."

"That is better," said John Clay, serenely. He made a sweeping bow to the three of us, and walked quietly off in the custody of the detective.

"Really, Mr. Holmes," said Mr. Merryweather, as we followed them from the cellar, "I do not know how the bank can thank you or repay you. There is no doubt that you have detected and defeated in the most complete manner one of the most determined attempts at bank robbery that have ever come within my experience."

"I have had one or two little scores of my own to settle with Mr. John Clay," said Holmes. "I have been at some small expense over this matter, which I shall expect the bank to refund, but beyond that I am

amply repaid by having had an experience which is in many ways unique, and by hearing the very remarkable narrative of the Red-headed League."

"You see, Watson," he explained, in the early hours of the morning, as we sat over a glass of whisky and soda in Baker Street, "it was perfectly obvious from the first that the only possible object of this rather fantastic business of the advertisement of the League, and the copying of the 'Encyclopædia,' must be to get this not over-bright pawnbroker out of the way for a number of hours every day. It was a curious way of managing it, but really it would be difficult to suggest a better. The method was no doubt suggested to Clay's ingenious mind by the color of his accomplice's hair. The four pounds a week was a lure which must draw him, and what was it to them, who were playing for thousands? They put in the advertisement, one rogue has the temporary office, the other rogue incites the man to apply for it, and together they manage to secure his absence every morning in the week. From the time that I heard of the assistant having come for half wages, it was obvious to me that he had some strong motive for securing the situation."

"But how could you guess what the motive was?"

"Had there been women in the house, I should have suspected a mere vulgar intrigue. That, however, was out of the question. The man's business was a small one, and there was nothing in his house which could

account for such elaborate preparations, and such an expenditure as they were at. It must then be something out of the house. What could it be? I thought of the assistant's fondness for photography, and his trick of vanishing into the cellar. The cellar? There was the end of this tangled clew. Then I made inquiries as to this mysterious assistant, and found that I had to deal with one of the coolest and most daring criminals in London. He was doing something in the cellar—something which took many hours a day for months on end. What could it be, once more? I could think of nothing save that he was running a tunnel to some other building.

"So far I had got when we went to visit the scene of action. I surprised you by beating upon the pavement with my stick. I was ascertaining whether the cellar stretched out in front or behind. It was not in front. Then I rang the bell, and, as I hoped, the assistant answered it. We have had some skirmishes, but we had never set eyes upon each other before. I hardly looked at his face. His knees were what I wished to see. You must yourself have remarked how worn, wrinkled, and stained they were. They spoke of those hours of burrowing. The only remaining point was what they were burrowing for. I walked round the corner, saw that the City and Suburban Bank abutted on our friend's premises, and felt that I had solved my problem. When you drove home after the concert I called upon Scotland Yard, and

upon the chairman of the bank directors, with the result that you have seen."

"And how could you tell that they would make their attempt to-night?" I asked.

"Well, when they closed their League offices that was a sign that they cared no longer about Mr. Jabez Wilson's presence; in other words, that they had completed their tunnel. But it was essential that they should use it soon, as it might be discovered, or the bullion might be removed. Saturday would suit them better than any other day, as it would give them two days for their escape. For all these reasons I expected them to come to-night."

"You reasoned it out beautifully," I exclaimed, in unfeigned admiration. "It is so long a chain, and yet every link rings true."

"It saved me from ennui," he answered, yawning. "Alas! I already feel it closing in upon me. My life is spent in one long effort to escape from the commonplaces of existence. These little problems help me to do so."

"And you are a benefactor of the race," said I. He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, perhaps, after all, it is of some little use," he remarked.

V.—The Ransom of Red Chief*

By O. Henry

IT looked like a good thing: but wait till I tell you. We were down South, in Alabama—Bill Driscoll and myself—when this kidnaping idea struck us. It was, as Bill afterward expressed it, "during a moment of temporary mental apparition"; but we didn't find that out till later.

There was a town down there, as flat as a flannel-cake, and called Summit, of course. It contained inhabitants of as undeleterious and self-satisfied a class of peasantry as ever clustered around a Maypole.

Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two thousand dollars more to pull off a fraudulent town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with. We talked it over on the front steps of the hotel. Philoprogenitiveness, says we, is strong

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in semi-rural communities; therefore, and for other reasons, a kidnaping project ought to do better there than in the radius of newspapers that send reporters out in plain clothes to stir up talk about such things. We knew that Summit couldn't get after us with anything stronger than constables and, maybe, some lackadaisical bloodhounds and a diatribe or two in the *Weekly Farmers' Budget.* So, it looked good.

We selected for our victim the only child of a prominent citizen named Ebenezer Dorset. The father was respectable and tight, a mortgage fancier and a stern, upright collection-plate passer and foreCloser. The kid was a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and hair the color of the cover of the magazine you buy at the news-stand when you want to catch a train. Bill and me figured that Ebenezer would melt down for a ransom of two thousand dollars to a cent. But wait till I tell you.

About two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with a dense cedar brake. On the rear elvation of this mountain was a cave. There we stored provisions.

One evening after sundown, we drove in a buggy past old Dorset's house. The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten on the opposite fence.

"Hey, little boy!" says Bill, "would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?"

The boy catches Bill neatly in the eye with a piece of brick.

"That will cost the old man an extra five hundred dollars," says Bill, climbing over the wheel.

That boy put up a fight like a welter-weight cinnamon bear; but, at last, we got him down in the bottom of the buggy and drove away. We took him up to the cave, and I hitched the horse in the cedar brake. After dark I drove the buggy to the little village, three miles away, where we had hired it, and walked back to the mountain.

Bill was pasting court-plaster over the scratches and bruises on his features. There was a fire burning behind the big rock at the entrance of the cave, and the boy was watching a pot of boiling coffee, with two buzzard tail-feathers stuck in his red hair. He points a stick at me when I come up, and says:

"Ha! cursed paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

"He's all right now," says Bill, rolling up his trousers and examining some bruises on his shins. "We're playing Indian. We're making Buffalo Bill's show look like magic-lantern views of Palestine in the town hall. I'm Old Hank, the Trapper, Red Chief's captive, and I'm to be scalped at daybreak. By Geronimo! that kid can kick hard."

Yes, sir, that boy seemed to be having the time of his life. The fun of camping out in a cave had made him forget that he was a captive himself. He immediately christened me Snake-eye, the Spy, and announced that, when his braves returned from the war-

path, I was to be broiled at the stake at the rising of the sun.

Then we had supper; and he filled his mouth full of bacon and bread and gravy, and began to talk. He made a during-dinner speech something like this:

"I like this fine. I never camped out before; but I had a pet 'possum once, and I was nine last birthday. I hate to go to school. Rats ate up sixteen of Jimmy Talbot's aunt's speckled hen's eggs. Are there any real Indians in these woods? I want some more gravy. Does the trees moving make the wind blow? We had five puppies. What makes your nose so red, Hank? My father has lots of money. Are the stars hot? I whipped Ed Walker twice, Saturday. I don't like girls. You dassent catch toads unless with a string. Do oxen make any noise? Why are oranges round? Have you got beds to sleep on in this cave? Amos Murray has got six toes. A parrot can talk, but a monkey or a fish can't. How many does it take to make twelve?"

Every few minutes he would remember that he was a pesky redskin, and pick up his stick rifle and tiptoe to the mouth of the cave to rubber for the scouts of the hated paleface. Now and then he would let out a war-whoop that made Old Hank the Trapper shiver. That boy had Bill terrorized from the start.

"Red Chief," says I to the kid, "would you like to go home?"

"Aw, what for?" says he. "I don't have any fun

at home. I hate to go to school. I like to camp out. You won't take me back home again, Snake-eye, will you?"

"Not right away," says I. "We'll stay here in the cave a while."

"All right!" says he. "That'll be fine. I never had such fun in all my life."

We went to bed about eleven o'clock. We spread down some wide blankets and quilts and put Red Chief between us. We weren't afraid he'd run away. He kept us awake for three hours, jumping up and reaching for his rifle and screeching: "Hist! pard," in mine and Bill's ears, as the fancied crackle of a twig or the rustle of a leaf revealed to his young imagination the stealthy approach of the outlaw band. At last, I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed that I had been kidnaped and chained to a tree by a ferocious pirate with red hair.

Just at daybreak, I was awakened by a series of awful screams from Bill. They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs—they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars. It's an awful thing to hear a strong, desperate, fat man scream incontinently in a cave at daybreak.

I jumped up to see what the matter was. Red Chief was sitting on Bill's chest, with one hand twined in Bill's hair. In the other he had the sharp case-knife

we used for slicing bacon; and he was industriously and realistically trying to take Bill's scalp, according to the sentence that had been pronounced upon him the evening before.

I got the knife away from the kid and made him lie down again. But, from that moment, Bill's spirit was broken. He laid down on his side of the bed, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as that boy was with us. I dozed off for a while, but along toward sun-up I remembered that Red Chief had said I was to be burned at the stake at the rising of the sun. I wasn't nervous or afraid; but I sat up and lit my pipe and leaned against a rock.

"What you getting up so soon for, Sam?" asked Bill.

"Me?" says I. "Oh, I got a kind of a pain in my shoulder. I thought sitting up would rest it."

"You're a liar!" says Bill. "You're afraid. You was to be burned at sunrise, and you was afraid he'd do it. And he would, too, if he could find a match. Ain't it awful, Sam? Do you think anybody will pay out money to get a little imp like that back home?"

"Sure," said I. "A rowdy kid like that is just the kind that parents dote on. Now, you and the Chief get up and cook breakfast, while I go up on the top of this mountain and reconnoiter."

I went up on the peak of the little mountain and ran my eye over the contiguous vicinity. Over toward Summit I expected to see the sturdy yeo-

manry of the village armed with scythes and pitchforks beating the countryside for the dastardly kidnapers. But what I saw was a peaceful landscape dotted with one man ploughing with a dun mule. Nobody was dragging the creek; no couriers dashed hither and yon, bringing tidings of no news to the distracted parents. There was a sylvan attitude of somnolent sleepiness pervading that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view. "Perhaps," says I to myself, "it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have borne away the tender lambkin from the fold. Heaven help the wolves!" says I, and I went down the mountain to breakfast.

When I got to the cave I found Bill backed up against the side of it, breathing hard, and the boy threatening to smash him with a rock half as big as a cocoanut.

"He put a red-hot boiled potato down my back," explained Bill, "and then mashed it with his foot; and I boxed his ears. Have you got a gun about you, Sam?"

I took the rock away from the boy and kind of patched up the argument. "I'll fix you," says the kid to Bill. "No man ever yet struck the Red Chief but what he got paid for it. You better beware!"

After breakfast the kid takes a piece of leather with strings wrapped around it out of his pocket and goes outside the cave unwinding it.

"What's he up to now?" says Bill anxiously. "You don't think he'll run away, do you, Sam?"

"No fear of it," says I. "He don't seem to be much of a home body. But we've got to fix up some plan about the ransom. There don't seem to be much excitement around Summit on account of his disappearance; but maybe they haven't realized yet that he's gone. His folks may think he's spending the night with Aunt Jane or one of the neighbors. Anyhow, he'll be missed to-day. To-night we must get a message to his father demanding the two thousand dollars for his return."

Just then we heard a kind of war-whoop, such as David might have emitted when he knocked out the champion Goliath. It was a sling that Red Chief had pulled out of his pocket, and he was whirling it around his head.

I dodged, and heard a heavy thud and a kind of a sigh from Bill, like a horse gives out when you take his saddle off. A niggerhead rock the size of an egg had caught Bill just behind his left ear. He loosened himself all over and fell in the fire across the frying pan of hot water for washing the dishes. I dragged him out and poured cold water on his head for half an hour.

By and by, Bill sits up and feels behind his ear and says: "Sam, do you know who my favorite Biblical character is?"

"Take it easy," says I. "You'll come to your senses presently."

"King Herod," says he. "You won't go away and leave me here alone, will you, Sam?"

I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled.

"If you don't behave," says I, "I'll take you straight home. Now, are you going to be good, or not?"

"I was only funning," says he sullenly. "I didn't mean to hurt Old Hank. But what did he hit me for? I'll behave, Snake-eye, if you won't send me home, and if you'll let me play the Black Scout to-day."

"I don't know the game," says I. "That's for you and Mr. Bill to decide. He's your playmate for the day. I'm going away for a while, on business. Now, you come in and make friends with him and say you are sorry for hurting him, or home you go, at once."

I made him and Bill shake hands, and then I took Bill aside and told him I was going to Poplar Cove, a little village three miles from the cave, and find out what I could about how the kidnaping had been regarded in Summit. Also, I thought it best to send a peremptory letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.

"You know, Sam," says Bill, "I've stood by you without batting an eye in earthquakes, fire, and flood —in poker games, dynamite outrages, police raids, train robberies, and cyclones. I never lost my nerve yet till we kidnaped that two-legged skyrocket of a

kid. He's got me going. You won't leave me long with him, will you, Sam?"

"I'll be back some time this afternoon," says I. "You must keep the boy amused and quiet till I return. And now we'll write the letter to old Dorset."

Bill and I got paper and pencil and worked on the letter while Red Chief, with a blanket wrapped around him, strutted up and down, guarding the mouth of the cave. Bill begged me tearfully to make the ransom fifteen hundred dollars instead of two thousand. "I ain't attempting," says he, "to decry the celebrated moral aspect of parental affection, but we're dealing with humans, and it ain't human for anybody to give up two thousand dollars for that forty-pound chunk of freckled wildcat. I'm willing to take a chance at fifteen hundred dollars. You can charge the difference up to me."

So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we collaborated a letter that ran this way:

"Ebenezer Dorset, Esq.:

"We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit. It is useless for you or the most skillful detectives to attempt to find him. Absolutely, the only terms on which you can have him restored to you are these: We demand fifteen hundred dollars in large bills for his return; the money to be left at midnight to-night at the same spot and in the same box as your reply—as hereinafter described. If you agree to these terms, send your answer in writing by a solitary messenger to-night at half-past eight o'clock. After crossing Owl Creek, on the road to Poplar Cove, there are three large

trees about a hundred yards apart, close to the fence of the wheat field on the right-hand side. At the bottom of the fence-post, opposite the third tree, will be found a small paste-board box.

"The messenger will place the answer in this box and return immediately to Summit.

"If you attempt any treachery or fail to comply with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.

"If you pay the money as demanded, he will be returned to you safe and well within three hours. These terms are final, and if you do not accede to them no further communication will be attempted.

"TWO DESPERATE MEN."

I addressed this letter to Dorset, and put it in my pocket. As I was about to start, the kid comes up to me and says:

"Aw, Snake-eye, you said I could play the Black Scout while you was gone."

"Play it, of course," says I. "Mr. Bill will play with you. What kind of a game is it?"

"I'm the Black Scout," says Red Chief, "and I have to ride to the stockade to warn the settlers that the Indians are coming. I'm tired of playing Indian myself. I want to be the Black Scout."

"All right," says I. "It sounds harmless to me. I guess Mr. Bill will help you foil the pesky savages."

"What am I to do?" asks Bill, looking at the kid suspiciously.

"You are the hoss," says Black Scout. "Get down on your hands and knees. How can I ride to the stockade without a hoss?"

"You'd better keep him interested," said I, "till we get the scheme going. Loosen up."

Bill gets down on his all fours, and a look comes in his eye like a rabbit's when you catch it in a trap.

"How far is it to the stockade, kid?" he asks, in a husky manner of voice.

"Ninety miles," says the Black Scout. "And you have to hump yourself to get there on time. Whoa, now!"

The Black Scout jumps on Bill's back and digs his heels in his side.

"For Heaven's sake," says Bill, "hurry back, Sam, as soon as you can. I wish we hadn't made the ransom more than a thousand. Say, you quit kicking me or I'll get up and warm you good."

I walked over to Poplar Cove and sat around the post-office and store, talking with the chawbacons that came in to trade. One whiskerando says that he hears Summit is all upset on account of Elder Ebenezer Dorset's boy having been lost or stolen. That was all I wanted to know. I bought some smoking tobacco, referred casually to the price of black-eyed peas, posted my letter surreptitiously, and came away. The postmaster said the mail-carrier would come by in an hour to take the mail on to Summit.

When I got back to the cave Bill and the boy were not to be found. I explored the vicinity of the cave, and risked a yodel or two, but there was no response.

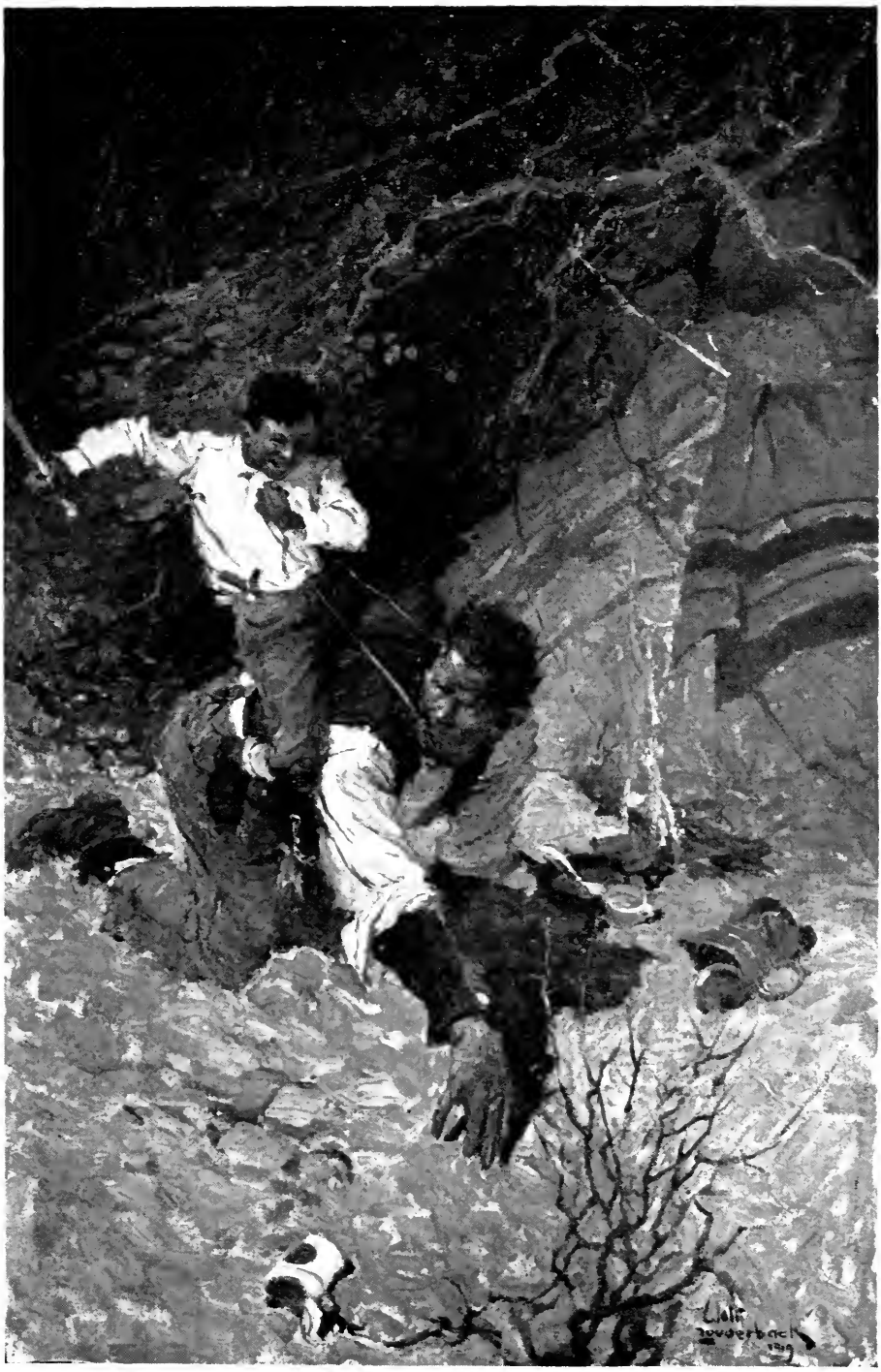
So I lighted my pipe and sat down on a mossy bank to await developments.

In about half an hour I heard the bushes rustle, and Bill wabbled out into the little glade in front of the cave. Behind him was the kid, stepping softly like a scout, with a broad grin on his face. Bill stopped, took off his hat, and wiped his face with a red handkerchief. The kid stopped about eight feet behind him.

"Sam," says Bill, "I suppose you'll think I'm a renegade, but I couldn't help it. I'm a grown person with masculine proclivities and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and predominance fail. The boy is gone. I have sent him home. All is off. There was martyrs in old times," goes on Bill, "that suffered death rather than give up the particular graft they enjoyed. None of 'em ever was subjugated to such supernatural tortures as I have been. I tried to be faithful to our articles of depredation; but there came a limit."

"What's the trouble, Bill?" I asks him.

"I was rode," says Bill, "the ninety miles to the stockade, not barring an inch. Then, when the settlers was rescued, I was given oats. Sand ain't a palatable substitute. And then, for an hour I had to try to explain to him why there was nothin' in holes, how a road can run both ways, and what makes the grass green. I tell you, Sam, a human can only stand so much. I takes him by the neck of his clothes and



THE BLACK SCOUT JUMPS ON BILL'S BACK AND DIGS HIS HEELS IN HIS SIDE

drags him down the mountain. On the way he kicks my legs black-and-blue from the knees down; and I've got to have two or three bites on my thumb and hand cauterized.

"But he's gone"—continues Bill—"gone home. I showed him the road to Summit and kicked him about eight feet nearer there at one kick. I'm sorry we lose the ransom; but it was either that or Bill Driscoll to the madhouse."

Bill is puffing and blowing, but there is a look of ineffable peace and growing content on his rose-pink features.

"Bill," says I, "there isn't any heart disease in your family, is there?"

"No," says Bill, "nothing chronic except malaria and accidents. Why?"

"Then you might turn around," says I, "and have a look behind you."

Bill turns and sees the boy, and loses his complexion and sits down plump on the ground and begins to pluck aimlessly at grass and little sticks. For an hour I was afraid for his mind. And then I told him that my scheme was to put the whole job through immediately and that we would get the ransom and be off with it by midnight if old Dorset fell in with our proposition. So Bill braced up enough to give the kid a weak sort of a smile and a promise to play the Russian in a Japanese war with him as soon as he felt a little better.

I had a scheme for collecting that ransom without danger of being caught by counterplots that ought to commend itself to professional kidnapers. The tree under which the answer was to be left—and the money later on—was close to the road fence with big, bare fields on all sides. If a gang of constables should be watching for any one to come for the note, they could see him a long way off crossing the fields or in the road. But no, siree! At half-past eight I was up in that tree as well hidden as a tree toad, waiting for the messenger to arrive.

Exactly on time, a half-grown boy rides up the road on a bicycle, locates the pasteboard box at the foot of the fence-post, slips a folded piece of paper into it, and pedals away again back toward Summit.

I waited an hour and then concluded the thing was square. I slid down the tree, got the note, slipped along the fence till I struck the woods, and was back at the cave in another half an hour. I opened the note, got near the lantern, and read it to Bill. It was written with a pen in a crabbed hand, and the sum and substance of it was this:

"Two Desperate Men.

"Gentlemen: I received your letter to-day by post, in regard to the ransom you ask for the return of my son. I think you are a little high in your demands, and I hereby make you a counter-proposition, which I am inclined to believe you will accept. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands. You had better come at night, for the

neighbors believe he is lost, and I couldn't be responsible for what they would do to anybody they saw bringing him back.

"Very respectfully,

"EBENEZER DORSET."

"Great pirates of Penzance!" says I; "of all the impudent——"

But I glanced at Bill, and hesitated. He had the most appealing look in his eyes I ever saw on the face of a dumb or a talking brute.

"Sam," says he, "what's two hundred and fifty dollars, after all? We've got the money. One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam. Besides being a thorough gentleman, I think Mr. Dorset is a spendthrift for making us such a liberal offer. You ain't going to let the chance go, are you?"

"Tell you the truth, Bill," says I, "this little he ewe lamb has somewhat got on my nerves too. We'll take him home, pay the ransom, and make our getaway."

We took him home that night. We got him to go by telling him that his father had bought a silver-mounted rifle and a pair of moccasins for him, and we were going to hunt bears the next day.

It was just twelve o'clock when we knocked at Ebenezer's front door. Just at the moment when I should have been abstracting the fifteen hundred dollars from the box under the tree, according to the original proposition, Bill was counting out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.

When the kid found out we were going to leave him at home he started up a howl like a calliope and fastened himself as tight as a leech to Bill's leg. His father peeled him away gradually, like a porous plaster.

"How long can you hold him!" asks Bill.

"I'm not as strong as I used to be," says old Dorset, "but I think I can promise you ten minutes."

"Enough," says Bill. "In ten minutes I shall cross the Central, Southern, and Middle Western States, and be legging it trippingly for the Canadian border."

And, as dark as it was, and as fat as Bill was, and as good a runner as I am, he was a good mile and a half out of Summit before I could catch up with him.

VI.—The Honk-Honk Breed*

By Stewart Edward White

IT was Sunday at the ranch. For a wonder the weather had been favorable; the windmills were all working, the bogs had dried up, the beef had lasted over, the remuda had not strayed—in short, there was nothing to do. Sang had given us a baked bread-pudding with raisins in it. We filled it in—a wash-basin full of it—on top of a few incidental pounds of *chile con*, baked beans, soda biscuits, "air-tights," and other delicacies. Then we adjourned with our pipes to the shady side of the blacksmith's shop where we could watch the ravens on top the adobe wall of the corral. Somebody told a story about ravens. This led to road-runners. This suggested rattlesnakes. They started Windy Bill.

"Speakin' of snakes," said Windy, "I mind when they catched the great-granddaddy of all the bull-

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snakes up at Lead in the Black Hills. I was only a kid then. This wasn't no such tur'ble long a snake, but he was more'n a foot thick. Looked just like a sahuaro stalk. Man name of Terwilliger Smith catched it. He named this yere bull-snake Clarence, and got it so plumb gentle it followed him everywhere. One day old P. T. Barnum come along and wanted to buy this Clarence snake—offered Terwilliger a thousand cold—but Smith wouldn't part with the snake nohow. So finally they fixed up a deal so Smith could go along with the show. They shoved Clarence in a box in the baggage car, but after a while Mr. Snake gets so lonesome he gnaws out and starts to crawl back to find his master. Just as he is half-way between the baggage car and the smoker, the couplin' give way—right on that heavy grade between Custer and Rocky Point. Well, sir, Clarence wound his head 'round one brake wheel and his tail around the other, and held that train together to the bottom of the grade. But it stretched him twenty-eight feet and they had to advertise him as a boa-constrictor."

Windy Bill's history of the faithful bull-snake aroused to reminiscence the grizzled stranger, who thereupon held forth as follows:

Wall, I've see things and I've heerd things, some of them ornery, and some you'd love to believe, they was that gorgeous and improbable. Nat'ral history was always my hobby and sportin' events my special pleasure—and this yarn of Windy's reminds me of the

only chanst I ever had to ring in business and pleasure and hobby all in one grand merry-go-round of joy. It come about like this:

One day, a few year back, I was sittin' on the beach at Santa Barbara watchin' the sky stay up, and wonderin' what to do with my year's wages, when a little squinch-eye round-face with big bow spectacles came and plumped down beside me.

"Did you ever stop to think," says he, shovin' back his hat, "that if the horse-power delivered by them waves on this beach in one single hour could be concentrated behind washin' machines, it would be enough to wash all the shirts for a city of four hundred and fifty-one thousand one hundred and thirty-six people?"

"Can't say I ever did," says I, squintin' at him sideways.

"Fact," says he, "and did it ever occur to you that if all the food a man eats in the course of a natural life could be gathered together at one time, it would fill a wagon-train twelve miles long?"

"You make me hungry," says I.

"And ain't it interestin' to reflect," he goes on, "that if all the finger-nail parin's of the human race for one year was to be collected and subjected to hydraulic pressure it would equal in size the pyramid of Cheops?"

"Look here," says I. sittin' up, "did you ever pause to excogitate that if all the hot air you is dispensin' was to be collected together it would fill a balloon big

enough to waft you and me over that Bullyvard of Palms to yonder gin mill on the corner?"

He didn't say nothin' to that—just yanked me to my feet, faced me towards the gin mill above mentioned, and exerted considerable pressure on my arm in urgin' of me forward.

"You ain't so much of a dreamer, after all," thinks I. "In important matters you are plumb decisive."

We sat down at little tables, and my friend ordered a beer and a chicken sandwich.

"Chickens," says he, gazin' at the sandwich, "is a dollar apiece in this country, and plumb scarce. Did you ever pause to ponder over the returns chickens would give on a small investment? Say you start with ten hens. Each hatches out thirteen aigs, of which allow a loss of say six for childish accidents. At the end of two years that flock has increased to six hundred and twenty. At the end of the third year——"

He had the medicine tongue! Ten days later him and me was occupyin' of an old ranch fifty mile from anywhere. When they run stage-coaches this joint used to be a road-house. The outlook was on about a thousand little brown foothills. A road two miles four rods two foot eleven inches in sight run by in front of us. It come over one foothill and disappeared over another. I know just how long it was, for later in the game I measured it.

Out back was about a hundred little wire chicken

corrals filled with chickens. We had two kinds. That was the doin's of Tuscarora. My pardner called himself Tuscarora Maxillary. I asked him once if that was his real name.

"It's the realest little old name you ever heerd tell of," says he. "I know, for I made it myself—liked the sound of her. Parents ain't got no rights to name their children. Parents don't have to be called them names."

Well, these chickens, as I said, was of two kinds. The first was these low-set, heavy-weight propositions with feathers on their laigs, and not much laigs at that, called Cochin Chinys. The other was a tall ridiculous outfit made up entire of bulgin' breast and gangle laigs. They stood about two foot and a half tall, and when they went to peck the ground their tail feathers stuck straight up to the sky. Tusky called 'em Japanese Games.

"Which the chief advantage of them chickens is," says he, "that in weight about ninety per cent. of 'em is breast meat. Now my idee is, that if we can cross 'em with these Cochin Chiny fowls we'll have a low-hung, heavy-weight chicken runnin' strong on breast meat. These Jap Games is too small, but if we can bring 'em up in size and shorten their laigs, we'll shore have a winner."

That looked good to me, so we started in on that idee. The theery was bully, but she didn't work out. The first broods we hatched growed up with big

husky Cochin Chiny bodies and little short necks, perched up on laigs three foot long. Them chickens couldn't reach ground nohow. We had to build a table for 'em to eat off, and when they went out rustlin' for themselves they had to confine themselves to side-hills or flyin' insects. Their breasts was all right, though—"And think of them drumsticks for the boardin'-house trade!" says Tusky.

So far things wasn't so bad. We had a good grub-stake. Tusky and me used to feed them chickens twict a day, and then used to set around watchin' the playful critters chase grasshoppers up and down the wire corrals, while Tusky figgered out what'd happen if somebody was dumfool enough to gather up somethin' and fix it in baskets or wagons or such. That was where we showed our ignorance of chickens.

One day in the spring I hitched up, rustled a dozen of the youngsters into coops, and druv over to the railroad to make our first sale. I couldn't fold them chickens up into them coops at first, but then I stuck the coops up on aidge and they worked all right, though I will admit they was a comical sight. At the railroad one of them towerist trains had just slowed down to a halt as I come up, and the towerists was paradin' up and down allowin' they was particular enjoyin' of the warm Californy sunshine. One old terrapin with gray chin whiskers, projected over, with his wife, and took a peek through the slats of my coop.

He straightened up like some one had touched him off with a red-hot poker.

"Stranger," said he, in a scared kind of whisper, "what's them?"

"Them's chickens," says I.

He took another long look.

"Marthy," says he to the old woman, "this will be about all! We come out from Ioway to see the Wonders of Californy, but I can't go nothin' stronger than this. If these is chickens, I don't want to see no Big Trees."

Well, I sold them chickens all right for a dollar and two bits, which was better than I expected, and got an order for more. About ten days later I got a letter from the commission house.

"We are returnin' a sample of your Arts and Crafts chickens with the lovin' marks of the teeth still onto him," says they. "Don't send any more till they stops pursuin' of the nimble grasshopper. Dentist bill will foller."

With the letter came the remains of one of the chickens. Tusky and I, very indignant, cooked her for supper. She was tough, all right. We thought she might do better biled, so we put her in the pot over night. Nary bit. Well, then ge got interested. Tusky kep' the fire goin' and I rustled greasewood. We cooked her three days and three nights. At the end of that time she was sort of pale and frazzled, but still givin' points to three-year-old jerky on cohesion

and other uncompromisin' forces of Nature. We buried her then, and went out back to recuperate.

There we could gaze on the smilin' landscape, dotted by about four hundred long-laigged chickens swoopin' here and there after grasshoppers.

"We got to stop that," says I.

"We can't," murmured Tusky, inspiried. "We can't. It's born in 'em; it's primal instinct, like the love of a mother for her young, and it can't be eradicated! Them chickens is constructed by a divine providence for the express purpose of chasin' grasshoppers, just as the beaver is made for building dams, and the cow-puncher is made for whisky and faro-games. We can't keep 'em from it. If we was to shut 'em in a dark cellar, they'd flop after imaginary grasshoppers in their dreams, and die emaciated in the midst of plenty. Jimmy, we're up agin the Cosmos, the oversoul——" Oh, he had the medicine tongue, Tusky had, and risin' on the wings of eloquence that way, he had me faded in ten minutes. In fifteen I was wedded solid to the notion that the bottom had dropped out of the chicken business. I think now that if we'd shut them hens up, we might have—still, I don't know; they was a good deal in what Tusky said.

"Tuscarora Maxillary," says I, "did you ever stop to entertain that beautiful thought that if all the dum-foolishness possessed now by the human race could be gathered together, and lined up alongside of us, the

first feller to come along would say to it, 'Why, hello, Solomon!' "

We quit the notion of chickens for profit right then and there, but we couldn't quit the place. We hadn't much money, for one thing, and then we kind of liked loafin' around and raisin' a little garden truck, and—oh, well, I might as well say so, we had a notion about placers in the dry wash back of the house—you know how it is. So we stayed on, and kept a-raisin' these long-laigs for the fun of it. I used to like to watch 'em projectin' around, and I fed 'em twict a day about as usual.

So Tusky and I lived alone there together, happy as ducks in Arizona. About onc't in a month somebody'd pike along the road. She wasn't much of a road, generally more chuck-holes than bumps, though sometimes it was the other way around. Unless it happened to be a man horseback or maybe a freighter without the fear of God in his soul, we didn't have no words with them; they was too busy cussin' the highways and generally too mad for social discourses.

One day early in the year, when the 'dobe mud made ruts to add to the bumps, one of these automobeels went past. It was the first Tusky and me had seen in them parts, so we run out to view her.

"Which them folks don't seem to be enjoyin' of the scenery," says I to Tusky. "Do you reckon that there blue trail is smoke from the machine or remarks from the inhabitants thereof?"

Tusky raised his head and sniffed long and inquirin'.

"It's langwidge," says he. "Did you ever stop to think that all the words in the dictionary hitched end to end would reach——"

But at that minute I catched sight of somethin' brass lyin' in the road. It proved to be a curled-up sort of horn with a rubber bulb on the end. I squoze the bulb and jumped twenty foot over the remark she made.

"Jarred off the machine," says Tusky.

"Oh, did it?" says I, my nerves still wrong. "I thought maybe it had growed up from the soil like a toadstool."

About this time we abolished the wire chicken corrals, because we needed some of the wire. Them long-laigs thereupon scattered all over the flat searchin' out their prey. When feed time come I had to screech my lungs out gettin' of 'em in, and then sometimes they didn't all hear. It was plumb discouragin', and I mighty nigh made up my mind to quit 'em, but they had come to be sort of pets, and I hated to turn 'em down. It used to tickle Tusky almost to death to see me out there hollerin' away like an old bull-frog. He used to come out reg'la, with his pipe lit, just to enjoy me. Finally I got mad and opened up on him.

"Oh," he explains, "it just plumb amuses me to see the dumfool at his childish work. Why don't you

teach 'em to come to that brass horn, and save your voice?"

"Tusky," says I, with feelin', "sometimes you do seem to get a glimmer of real sense."

Well, first off them chickens used to throw back-summersets over that horn. You have no idee how slow chickens is to learn things. I could tell you things about chickens—say, this yere bluff about roosters bein' gallant is all wrong. I've watched 'em. When one finds a nice feed he gobbles it so fast that the pieces foller down his throat like yearlin's through a hole in the fence. It's only when he scratches up a measly one-grain quick-lunch that he calls up the hens and stands noble and self-sacrificin' to one side. That ain't the point, which is, that after two months I had them long-laigs so they'd drop everythin' and come kitin' at the honk-honk of that horn. It was a purty sight to see 'em, sailin' in from all directions twenty foot at a stride. I was proud of 'em, and named 'em the Honk-honk Breed. We didn't have no others, for by now the coyotes and bob-cats had nailed the straight-breds. There wasn't no wild cat or coyote could catch one of my Honk-honks, no, sir!

We made a little on our placer—just enough to keep interested. Then the supervisors decided to fix our road, and what's more, *they done it!* That's the only part in this yarn that's hard to believe, but, boys, you'll have to take it on faith. They plowed her, and crowned her, and scraped her, and rolled her, and when

they moved on we had the fanciest highway in the State of Californy.

That noon—the day they called her a job—Tusky and I sat smokin' our pipes as per usual, when way over the foothills we seen a cloud of dust and faint to our ears was bore a whizzin' sound. The chickens was gathered under the cottonwood for the heat of the day, but they didn't pay no attention. Then faint, but clear, we heard another of them brass horns:

"Honk! honk!" says it, and every one of them chickens woke up, and stood at attention.

"Honk! honk!" it hollered clearer and nearer. Then over the hill come an automobeel, blowin' vigorous at every jump.

"Stop 'em! Stop 'em!" I yells to Tusky, kickin' over my chair, as I springs to my feet.

But it was too late. Out the gate sprinted them poor devoted chickens, and up the road they trailed in vain pursuit. The last we seen of 'em was a minglin' of dust and dim figgers goin' thirty mile an hour after a disappearin' automobeel.

That was all we seen for the moment. About three o'clock the first straggler came limpin' in, his wings hangin', his mouth open, his eyes glazed with the heat. By sundown fourteen had returned. All the rest had disappeared utter; we never seen 'em again. I reckon they just naturally run themselves into a sunstroke and died on the road.

It takes a long time to learn a chicken a thing, but

a heap longer to unlearn him. After that two or three of these yere automobeels went by every day, all a-blowin' of their horns. And every time them fourteen Honk-honks of mine took along after 'em, just as I'd taught 'em to do, layin' to get to their corn when they caught up. No more of 'em died, but that fourteen did get into elegant trainin'. After a while they got plumb to enjoyin' it. When you come right down to it, a chicken don't have many amusements and relaxations in this life. Searchin' for worms, chasin' grasshoppers, and wallerin' in the dust is about the limits of joys for chickens.

It was sure a fine sight to see 'em after they got well into the game. About nine o'clock every mornin' they would saunter down to the rise of the road where they would wait patient until a machine came along. Then it would warm your heart to see the enthusiasm of them. With exultant cackles of joy they'd trail in, reachin' out like quarter-horses, their wings half spread out, their eyes beamin' with delight. At the lower turn they'd quit. Then, after talkin' it over excited-like for a few minutes, they'd calm down and wait for another.

After a few months of this sort of trainin' they got purty good at it. I had one two-year-old rooster that made fifty-four mile an hour behind one of those sixty-horsepower Panhandles. When cars didn't come along often enough, they'd all turn out and chase jack-rabbits. They wasn't much fun at that. After

a short, brief sprint the rabbit would crouch down plumb terrified, while the Honk-honks pulled off triumphal dances around his shrinkin' form.

Our ranch got to be purty well known them days among automobeelists. The strength of their cars was horsepower, of course, but the speed of them they got to ratin' by chickenpower. Some of them used to come way up from Los Angeles just to try out a new car along our road with the Honk-honks for pacemakers. We charged them a little somethin' and then, too, we opened up the road-house and the bar, so we did purty well. It wasn't necessary to work any longer at that bogus placer. Evenin's we sat around outside and swapped yarns, and I bragged on my chickens. The chickens would gather round close to listen. They liked to hear their praises sung, all right. You bet they *sabe!* The only reason a chicken, or any other critter, isn't intelligent is because he hasn't no chance to expand.

Why, we used to run races with 'em. Some of us would hold two or more chickens back of a chalk line, and the starter'd blow the horn from a hundred yards to a mile away, dependin' on whether it was a sprint or for distance. We had pools on the results, gave odds, made books, and kept records. After the thing got knowed we made money hand over fist.

The stranger broke off abruptly and began to roll a cigarette.

"What did you quit it for, then?" ventured Charley, out of the hushed silence.

"Pride," replied the stranger solemnly. "Haughtiness of spirit."

"How so?" urged Charley, after a pause.

"Them chickens," continued the stranger, after a moment, "stood around listenin' to me a-braggin' of what superior fowls they was until they got all puffed up. They wouldn't have nothin' whatever to do with the ordinary chickens we brought in for eatin' purposes, but stood around lookin' bored when there wasn't no sport doin'. They got to be just like that Four Hundred you read about in the papers. It was one continual round of grasshopper balls, race meets, and afternoon hen-parties. They got idle and haughty, just like folks. They got to feelin' so aristocratic the hens wouldn't have no eggs."

Nobody dared say a word.

"Windy Bill's snake——" began the narrator genially.

"Stranger," broke in Windy Bill, with great emphasis, "as to that snake, I want you to understand this: yereafter in my estimation that snake is nothin' but an ornery angle-worm!"

VII.—The Devil-Fish*

By Norman Duncan

WHEN the Minister of Justice for the colony of Newfoundland went away from Ruddy Cove by the bay steamer, he chanced to leave an American magazine at the home of Billy Topsail's father, where he had passed the night. The magazine contained an illustrated article on the gigantic species of cephalopods[1] popularly known as devil-fish.

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[1] "The early literature of natural history has, from very remote times, contained allusions to huge species of cephalopods, often accompanied by more or less fabulous and usually exaggerated descriptions of the creatures. . . . The description of the 'poulpe,' or devil-fish, by Victor Hugo, in 'Toilers of the Sea,' with which so many readers are familiar, is quite as fabulous and unreal as any of the earlier accounts, and even more bizarre. . . . Special attention has only recently been called to the frequent occurrence of these

"'TIS THE DEVIL-FISH!" SCREAMED BOBBY

Billy Topsail did not know what a cephalopod was; but he did know a squid when he saw its picture, for Ruddy Cove is a fishing harbor, and he had caught many a thousand for bait. So when he found that to the lay mind a squid and a cephalopod were one and the same, save in size, he read the long article from beginning to end, doing the best he could with the strange, long words.

So interested was he that he read it again; and by that time he had learned enough to surprise him, even to terrify him, notwithstanding the writer's assurance that the power and ferocity of the creatures had generally been exaggerated.

He was a lad of sound common sense. He had never wholly doubted the tales of desperate encounters with devil-fish, told in the harbor these many years;

'big squids,' as our fishermen call them, in the waters of Newfoundland and the adjacent coasts. . . . I have been informed by many other fishermen that the 'big squids' are occasionally taken on the Grand Banks and used for bait. Nearly all the specimens hitherto taken appear to have been more or less disabled when first observed, otherwise they probably would not appear at the surface in the daytime. From the fact that they have mostly come ashore in the night, I infer that they inhabit chiefly the very deep and cold fiords of Newfoundland, and come to the surface only in the night."—From the "Report on the Cephalopods of the Northeastern Coast of America," by A. E. Verrill. Extracted from a report of the Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries, issued by the Government Printing Office at Washington. In this report twenty-five specimens of the large species taken in Newfoundland are described in detail.

for the various descriptions of how the long slimy arms had curled about the punts had rung too true to be quite disbelieved; but he had considered them somewhat less credible than certain wild yarns of shipwreck, and somewhat more credible than the bedtime stories of mermaids which the grandmothers told the children of the place.

Here, however, in plain print, was described the capture of a giant squid in a bay which lay beyond a point of land that Billy could see from the window.

That afternoon Billy put out in his leaky old punt to "jig" squid for bait. He was so disgusted with the punt—so ashamed of the squat, weather-worn, rotten cast-off—that he wished heartily for a new one all the way to the grounds. The loss of the *Never Give Up* had brought him to humiliating depths.

But when he had once joined the little fleet of boats, he cheerfully threw his grapnel into Bobby Lot's punt and beckoned Bobby aboard. Then, as together they drew the writhing-armed, squirting little squids from the water, he told of the "big squids" which lurked in the deep water beyond the harbor; and all the time Bobby opened his eyes wider and wider.

"Is they just like squids?" Bobby asked.

"But bigger," answered Billy. "Their bodies is so big as hogsheads. Their arms is thirty-five feet long."

Bobby picked a squid from the heap in the bottom of the boat. It had instinctively turned from a reddish-brown to a livid green, the color of sea-water;

indeed, had it been in the water, its enemy would have had hard work to see it.

He handled it gingerly; but the ugly little creature managed somehow to twine its slender arms about his hand, and swiftly to take hold with a dozen cup-like suckers. The boy uttered an exclamation of disgust, and shook it off. Then he shuddered, laughed at himself, shuddered again. A moment later he chose a dead squid for examination.

"Leave us look at it close," said he. "Then we'll know what a real devil-fish is like. Sure, I've been wantin' to know that for a long, long time."

They observed the long cylindrical body, flabby and cold, with the broad, flap-like tail attached. The head was repulsively ugly—perhaps because of the eyes, which were disproportionately large, brilliant, and, in the live squid, ferocious.

A group of arms—two long, slender, tentacular arms, and eight shorter, thicker ones—projected from the region of the mouth, which, indeed, was set in the center of the ring they formed at the roots. They were equipped with innumerable little suckers, were flexible and active, and as long as the head, body and tail put together.

Closer examination revealed that there was a horny beak, like a parrot's, in the mouth, and that on the under side of the head was a curious tube-like structure.

"Oh, that's his squirter!" Billy explained. "When

he wants to back up he points that forward, and squirts out water so hard as he can; and when he wants to go ahead he points it backward, and does the same thing. That's where his ink comes from, too, when he wants to make the water so dirty nobody can see him."

"What does he do with his beak?"

"When he gets his food in his arms he bites out pieces with his beak. He hasn't any teeth; but he's got something just as good—a tongue like a rasp."

"I wouldn't like to be cotched by a squid as big as a hogshead," Bobby remarked, timidly.

"Hut!" said Billy, grimly. "He'd make short work o' *you!* Why, b'y, they weighs half a tone apiece! I isn't much afraid, though," he added. "They're only squid. Afore I read about them in the book I used to think they was worse than they is—terrible ghostlike things. But they're no worse than squids, only bigger, and——"

"They're bad enough for *me*," Bobby interrupted.

"And," Billy concluded, "they only comes up in the night or when they're sore wounded and dyin'."

"I'm not goin' out at night, if I can help it," said Bobby, with a canny shake of the head.

"If they was a big squid come up the harbor to your house," said Billy, after a pause, "and got close to the rock, he could put one o' they two long arms in your bedroom window, and——"

" 'Tis in the attic!"

"Never mind that. He could put it in the window and feel around for your bed, and twist that arm around you, and——"

"I'd cut it off!"

"Anyhow, that's how long they is. And if he knowed you was there, and wanted you, he could get you. But I'm not so sure that he *would* want you. He couldn't see you, anyhow; and if he could, he'd rather have a good fat salmon."

Bobby shuddered as he looked at the tiny squid in his hand, and thought of the dreadful possibilities in one a thousand times as big.

"You leave them alone, and they'll leave you alone," Billy went on. "But if you once make them mad, they can dart their arms out like lightning. 'Tis time to get, then!"

"I'm goin' to keep an ax in my punt after this," said Bobby, "and if I sees an arm slippin' out of the water——"

"'Tis as big as your thigh!" cried Billy.

"Never mind. If I sees it I'll be able to cut it off."

"If I sees one," said Billy, "I'm goin' to cotch it. It said in the book that they was worth a lot to some people. And if I can sell mine I'm goin' to have a new punt."

But although Bobby Lot and Billy Topsail kept a sharp lookout for giant squids wherever they went, they were not rewarded. There was not so much as a sign of one. By and by, so bold did they become,

they hunted for one in the twilight of summer days, even daring to pry into the deepest coves and holes in the Ruddy Cove rocks.

Notwithstanding the ridicule he had to meet, Bobby never ventured out in the punt without a sharp ax. He could not tell what time he would need it, he said; and thus he formed the habit of making sure that it was in its place before casting off from the wharf.

As autumn drew near they found other things to think of; the big squids passed out of mind altogether.

"Wonderful queer," Billy said, long afterwards, "how things happen when you isn't expectin' them!"

One day late in September—it was near evening of a gray day—Billy Topsail and Bobby Lot were returning in Bobby's punt from Birds' Nest Islands, whither they had gone to hunt a group of seals, reported to have taken up a temporary residence there. They had a mighty, muzzle-loading, flintlock gun; and they were so delighted with the noise it made that they had exhausted their scanty provision of powder and lead long before the seals were in sight.

They had taken the shortest way home. It lay past Chain Hole, a small, landlocked basin, very deep, with a narrow entrance, which was shallow at low tide. The entrance opened into a broad bay, and was called Chain Tickle.

"What's that in the tickle?" Billy exclaimed, as they were rowing past.

It was a black object, apparently floating quietly on the surface of the water. The boys gazed at it for a long time, but could make nothing of it. They were completely puzzled.

"'Tis a small bit o' wreck, I'm thinkin'," said Bobby. "Leave us row close and see."

"Maybe 'tis a capsized punt."

When they were within about thirty yards of the object they lay on their oars. For some unaccountable reason they did not care to venture nearer. Twilight was then fast approaching. The light was already beginning to fail.

"'Tis a wonderful queer thing!" Billy muttered, his curiosity getting the better of him. "Row ahead, Bobby. We'll go alongside."

"They's something movin' on it!" Bobby whispered, as he let his oars fall in the water. "Look! They's two queer, big, round spots on it—big as plates."

Billy thought he saw the whole object move. He watched it closely. It *did* stir! It was some living thing, then. But what? A whale?

A long, snake-like arm was lifted out of the water. It swayed this way and that, darted here and there, and fell back with a splash. The moving spots, now plainly gigantic eyes, glittered.

"'Tis the devil-fish!" screamed Bobby.

Another arm was lifted up, then a third and a fourth

and a fifth. The monster began to lash the water—faster and yet more furiously—until the tickle was heaving and frothy, and the whole neighborhood was in an uproar.

"Pull! Pull!" cried Bobby.

Billy, too, was in a panic. They turned the head of the punt and pulled with all their might. The water swirled in the wake of the boat. Perceiving, however, that the squid made no effort to follow, they got the better of their fright. Then they lay on their oars to watch the monster.

They wondered why it still lay in the tickle, why it so furiously lashed the water with its arms and great tail. It was Bobby who solved the mystery.

"'Tis aground," said he.

That was evidently the situation. The squid had been caught in the shallow tickle when the tide, which ran swiftly at that point, was on the ebb. The boys took courage. Their curiosity still further emboldened them. So once more they turned the punt about and pulled cautiously towards the tickle.

There was less light than before, but still sufficient to disclose the baleful eyes and writhing arms of the squid when the boat was yet a safe distance away. One by one the arms fell back into the water, as if from exhaustion; slowly the beating of the tail subsided. After a time all sound and motion ceased. The boys waited for some further sign of life, but none came. The squid was still, as if dead.

"Sure, he's dead now," said Billy. "Leave us pull close up."

"Oh, no, b'y! He's but makin' believe."

But Billy thought otherwise. "I wants that squid," he said, in a dogged way, "and I'm goin' to have him. I'll sell him and get a new punt."

Bobby protested in vain. Nothing would content Billy Topsail but the possession of the big squid's body. Bobby pointed out that if the long, powerful arms were once laid on the boat there would be no escape. He recalled to Billy the harbor story of the horrible death of Zachariah North, who, as report said, had been pursued, captured, and pulled under water by a devil-fish in Gander Bay.[1]

It was all to no purpose, however, for Billy obstinately declared that he would make sure of the squid before the tide turned. He admitted a slight risk, but he wanted a new punt, and he was willing to risk something to obtain it.

He proposed to put Bobby ashore, and approach the squid alone; but Bobby would not listen. Two hands might be needed in the boat, he said. What if the squid were alive, after all? What if it laid hold of the punt? In that event, two hands would surely be needed.

"I'll go," he said. "But leave us pull slow. And

[1] Stories of this kind, of which there are many, are doubted by the authorities, who have found it impossible to authenticate a single instance of unprovoked attack.

if we sees so much as a wink of his eye we'll pull away."

They rowed nearer, with great caution. Billy was in the bow of the boat. It was he who had the ax. Bobby, seated amidships, faced the bow. It was he who did the rowing.

The squid was quiet. There was not a sign of life about it. Billy estimated the length of its body, from the beak to the point of the tail,, as twenty feet, the circumference as "the size of a hogshead." Its tentacular arms, he determined, must be at least thirty-five feet long; and when the boat came within that distance he shuddered.

"Is you sure he's dead?" Bobby whispered, weakly.

"I don't know!" Billy answered, in a gasp. "I thinks so."

Bobby dropped the oars and stepped to the bow of the punt. The boat lost way and came to a stop within twenty feet of the squid. Still there was no sign of life.

The boys stared at the great, still body, lying quiet in the gathering dusk and haze. Neither seemed to feel the slight trembling of the boat that might have warned them. Not a word was spoken until Billy, in a whisper, directed Bobby to pull the boat a few feet nearer.

"But we're movin' already," he added, in a puzzled way.

The boat was very slowly approaching the squid.

The motion was hardly perceptible, but it was real.

"'Tis queer!" said Bobby.

He turned to take up the oars. What he saw lying over the port gunwale of the boat made him gasp, grip Billy's wrist and utter a scream of terror!

"We're cotched!"

The squid had fastened one of its tentacles to the punt. The other was poised above the stern, ready to fall and fix its suckers. The onward movement of the punt was explained.

Billy knew the danger, but he was not so terrified as to be incapable of action. He was about to spring to the stern to strike off the tentacle that already lay over the gunwale; but as he looked down to choose his step he saw that one of the eight powerful arms was slowly creeping over the starboard bow.

He struck at that arm with all his might, missed, wrenched the ax from the gunwale, and struck true. The mutilated arm was withdrawn. Billy leaped to the stern, vaguely conscious in passing that another arm was creeping from the water. He severed the first tentacle with one blow. When he turned to strike the second it had disappeared; so, too, had the second arm. The boat seemed to be free, but it was still within grasp.

In the meantime the squid had awakened to furious activity. It was lashing the water with arms and tail, angrily snapping its great beak and ejecting streams of

black water from its siphon-tube. The water was violently agitated and covered with a black froth.

In this the creature manifested fear and distress. Had it not been aground it would have backed swiftly into the deep water of the basin. But, as if finding itself at bay, it lifted its uninjured tentacle high above the boat. Billy made ready to strike.

By this time Bobby had mastered his terror. While Billy stood with uplifted ax, his eyes fixed on the waving tentacle overhead, Bobby heaved mightily on the oars. The boat slowly drew away from that highly dangerous neighborhood. In a moment it was beyond reach of the arms, but still, apparently, within reach of the tentacle. The tentacle was withdrawn a short distance; then like a flash it shot towards the boat, writhing as it came.

Billy struck blindly—and struck nothing. The tentacle had fallen short. The boat was out of danger!

But still Billy Topsail was determined to have the body of the squid. Notwithstanding Bobby's pleading and protestation, he would not abandon his purpose. He was only the more grimly bent on achieving it. Bobby would not hear of again approaching nearer than the boat then floated, nor did Billy think it advisable. But it occurred to Bobby that they might land, and approach the squid from behind. If they could draw near enough, he said, they could cast the

grapnel on the squid's back, and moor it to a tree ashore.

"Sure," he said, excitedly, "you can pick up a squid from behind, and it can't touch you with its arms! It won't be able to see us, and it won't be able to reach us."

So they landed. Billy carried the grapnel, which was attached to twelve fathoms of line. It had six prongs, and each prong was barbed.

A low cliff at the edge of the tickle favored the plan. The squid lay below, and some twenty feet out from the rock. It was merely a question of whether or not Billy was strong enough to throw the grapnel so far. They tied the end of the line to a stout shrub. Billy cast the grapnel, and it was a strong, true cast. The iron fell fair on the squid's back. It was a capture.

"That means a new punt for me," said Billy, quietly. "The tide'll not carry *that* devil-fish away."

"And now," Bobby pleaded, "leave us make haste home, for 'tis growin' wonderful dark—and—and there might be another somewhere."

So that is how one of the largest specimens of *Architeuthis princeps*—enumerated in Prof. John Adam Wright's latest monograph on the cephalopods of North America as the "Chain Tickle specimen"—was captured. And that is how Billy Topsail fairly won a new punt; for when Doctor Marvey, the curator of the Public Museum at St. John's—who is deeply

interested in the study of the giant squids—came to Ruddy Cove to make photographs and take measurements, in response to a message from Billy's father, he rewarded the lad.

VIII.—The Jumping Frog*

By Mark Twain

IN compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that *Leonidas W.* Smiley is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; and that he only conjectured that if I asked old Wheeler about him, it would remind him of his infamous *Jim* Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me to death with some exasperating reminiscence

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of him as long and as tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was the design, it succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar-room stove of the dilapidated tavern in the decaying mining camp of Angel's, and I noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up, and gave me good-day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named *Leonidas W.* Smiley—*Rev. Leonidas W.* Smiley, a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of Angel's Camp. I added that if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned his initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in *finesse.*

I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once.

"Rev. Leonidas W. H'm, Reverend Le—well, there was a feller here once by the name of *Jim* Smiley, in the winter of '49—or maybe it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume warn't finished when he first came to the camp; but anyway, he was the curiosest man about always betting on anything that turned up you ever see, if he could get anybody to bet on the other side, and if he couldn't he'd change sides. Any way what suited the other man would suit *him*—any way just so's he got a bet, *he* was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he 'most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solit'ry thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take ary side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds sitting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting, he would be there reg'lar to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so he was, too, and a good man. If he even see a straddle-bug start to go anywheres, he

would bet you how long it would take him to get to—to wherever he was going to, and if you took him up, he would foller that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley, and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to *him*—he'd bet on *any* thing—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he came in, and Smiley up and asked him how she was, and he said she was consid'able better—thank the Lord for his inf'nite mercy—and coming on so smart that with the blessing of Prov'dence she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says: 'Well, I'll resk two-and-a-half she don't anyway.'

"Thish-yer Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because, of course, she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag end of the race she'd get excited and desperate like, and come cavorting and straddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side among the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust and raising m-o-r-e

racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and *always* fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.

"And he had a little small bull-pup, that to look at him you'd think he warn't worth a cent but to set around and look ornery and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him he was a different dog; his under-jaw'd begin to stick out like the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover and shine like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him and bully-rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what *he* was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to it—not chaw, you understand, but only just grip and hang on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off in a circular saw, and when the thing had gone alone far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he see in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discour-

aged-like and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was *his* fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't no opportunities to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tomcats, and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he *did* learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summerset, or maybe a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of ketching flies, and kep' him in practice

so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as fur as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do 'most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog—and sing out, 'Flies, Dan'l, flies!' and quicker'n you could wink he'd spring straight up and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor ag'in as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywheres all said he laid over any frog that ever *they* see.

"Well, Smiley kep' the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down-town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come acrost him with his box, and says:

" 'What might it be that you've got in the box?'

"And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like: 'It might

be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain't —it's only just a frog.'

"And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says: 'H'm—so 'tis. Well, what's *he* good for?'

" 'Well,' Smiley says, easy and careless, 'he's good enough for *one* thing, I should judge—he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county.'

"The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, 'Well,' he says, 'I don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.'

" 'Maybe you don't,' Smiley says. 'Maybe you understand frogs and maybe you don't understand 'em; maybe you've had experience, and maybe you ain't only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I've got *my* opinion, and I'll resk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county.'

"And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, 'Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I ain't got no frog; but if I had a frog, I'd bet you.'

"And then Smiley says, 'That's all right—that's all right—if you hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog.' And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.

"So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prized

his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin —and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

" 'Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his forepaws just even with Dan'l's, and I'll give the word.' Then he says, 'One—two—three—*git!*' and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off lively, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it warn't no use—he couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as a church, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

"The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulder—so—at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, 'Well,' he says, '*I* don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.'

"Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, 'I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for—I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow.' And

he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and hefted him, and says, 'Why, blame my cats if he don't weigh five pound!' and turned him upside down and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And——"

[Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.] And turning to me as he moved away, he said: "Just set where you are, stranger, and rest easy—I ain't going to be gone a second."

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond *Jim* Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. *Leonidas W.* Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he button-holed me and re-commenced:

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yeller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only just a short stump like a bananner, and——"

However, lacking both time and inclination, I did not wait to hear about the afflicted cow, but took my leave.

IX.—Bingism*

By Booth Tarkington

PENROD SCHOFIELD, having been "kept in" for that unjust period of twenty minutes after school, emerged to a deserted street. That is, the street was deserted so far as Penrod was concerned. Here and there people were to be seen upon the sidewalks, but they were adults, and they and the shade trees had about the same quality of significance in Penrod's consciousness. Usually he saw grown people in the mass, which is to say, they were virtually invisible to him, though exceptions must be taken in favor of policemen, firemen, street-car conductors, motormen, and all other men in any sort of

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uniform or regalia. But this afternoon none of these met the roving eye, and Penrod set out upon his homeward way wholly dependent upon his own resources.

To one of Penrod's inner texture, a mere unadorned walk from one point to another was intolerable, and he had not gone a block without achieving some slight remedy for the tameness of life. An electric-light pole at the corner, invested with powers of observation, might have been surprised to find itself suddenly enacting a rôle of dubious honor in improvised melodrama. Penrod, approaching, gave the pole a look of sharp suspicion, then one of conviction; slapped it lightly and contemptuously with his open hand; passed on a few paces, but turned abruptly, and, pointing his right forefinger, uttered the symbolic word, "Bing!"

The plot was somewhat indefinite; yet nothing is more certain than that the electric-light pole had first attempted something against him, then growing bitter when slapped, and stealing after him to take him treacherously in the back, had got itself shot through and through by one too old in such warfare to be caught off his guard.

Leaving the body to lie where it was, he placed the smoking pistol in a holster at his saddlebow—he had decided that he was mounted—and proceeded up the street. At intervals he indulged himself in other encounters, reining in at first suspicion of ambush with a muttered, "Whoa, Charlie!" or "Whoa, Mike!" or even "Whoa, Washington!" for preoccupation with

the enemy outweighed attention to the details of theatrical consistency, though the steed's varying names were at least harmoniously masculine, since a boy, in these creative moments, never rides a mare. And having brought Charlie or Mike or Washington to a standstill, Penrod would draw the sure weapon from its holster and—"Bing! Bing! Bing!"—let them have it.

It is not to be understood that this was a noisy performance, or even an obvious one. It attracted no attention from any pedestrian, and it was to be perceived only that a boy was proceeding up the street at a somewhat irregular gait. Three or four years earlier, when Penrod was seven or eight, he would have shouted "Bing!" at the top of his voice; he would have galloped openly; all the world might have seen that he bestrode a charger. But a change had come upon him with advancing years. Although the grown people in sight were indeed to him as walking trees, his dramas were accomplished principally by suggestion and symbol. His "Whoas" and "Bings" were delivered in a husky whisper, and his equestrianism was established by action mostly of the mind, the accompanying artistry of the feet being unintelligible to the passerby.

And yet, though he concealed from observation the stirring little scenes he thus enacted, a love of realism was increasing within him. Early childhood is not fastidious about the accessories of its drama—

a cane is vividly a gun which may instantly, as vividly, become a horse; but at Penrod's time of life the lath sword is no longer satisfactory. Indeed, he now had a vague sense that weapons of wood were unworthy to the point of being contemptible and ridiculous, and he employed them only when he was alone and unseen. For months a yearning had grown more and more poignant in his vitals, and this yearning was symbolized by one of his most profound secrets. In the inner pocket of his jacket he carried a bit of wood whittled into the distant likeness of a pistol, but not even Sam Williams had seen it. The wooden pistol never knew the light of day, save when Penrod was in solitude; and yet it never left his side except at night, when it was placed under his pillow. Still, it did not satisfy; it was but the token of his yearning and his dream. With all his might and main Penrod longed for one thing beyond all others. He wanted a Real Pistol!

That was natural. Pictures of real pistols being used to magnificently romantic effect were upon almost all the billboards in town, the year round; and as for the "movie" shows, they could not have lived an hour unpistoled. In the drug store, where Penrod bought his candy and soda when he was in funds, he would linger to turn the pages of periodicals whose illustrations were fascinatingly pistolic. Some of the magazines upon the very library table at home were sprinkled with pictures of people (usually in

evening clothes) pointing pistols at other people. Nay, the Library Board of the town had emitted a "Selected List of Fifteen Books for Boys," and Penrod had read fourteen of them with pleasure, but as the fifteenth contained no weapons in the earlier chapters and held forth little prospect of any shooting at all, he abandoned it halfway, and read the most sanguinary of the other fourteen over again. So, the daily food of his imagination being gun, what wonder that he thirsted for the Real!

He passed from the sidewalk into his own yard, with a subdued "Bing" inflicted upon the stolid person of a gatepost, and, entering the house through the kitchen, ceased to bing for a time. However, driven back from the fore part of the house by a dismal sound of callers, he returned to the kitchen and sat down.

"Della," he said to the cook, "do you know what I'd do if you was a crook and I had my ottomatic with me?"

Della was industrious and preoccupied. "If I was a cook!" she repeated ignorantly, and with no cordiality. "Well, I *am* a cook. I'm a-cookin' right now. Either g'wan in the house where y'b'long, or git out in th' yard!"

Penrod chose the latter, and betook himself slowly to the back fence, where he was greeted in a boisterous manner by his wistful little old dog, Duke, returning from some affair of his own in the alley.

"Get down!" said Penrod coldly, and bestowed a spiritless "Bing!" upon him.

At this moment a shout was heard from the alley, "Yay, Penrod!" and the sandy head of comrade Sam Williams appeared above the fence.

"Come on over," said Penrod.

As Sam obediently climbed the fence, the little old dog, Duke, moved slowly away, but presently, glancing back over his shoulder and seeing the two boys standing together, he broke into a trot and disappeared round a corner of the house. He was a dog of long and enlightening experience; and he made it clear that the conjunction of Penrod and Sam portended events which, from his point of view, might be unfortunate. Duke had a forgiving disposition, but he also possessed a melancholy wisdom. In the company of either Penrod or Sam, alone, affection often caused him to linger, albeit with a little pessimism, but, when he saw them together, he invariably withdrew in as unobtrusive a manner as haste would allow.

"What you doin'?" Sam asked.

"Nothin'. What you?"

"I'll show you if you'll come over to our house," said Sam, who was wearing an important and secretive expression.

"What for?" Penrod showed little interest.

"Well, I said I'd show you if you came on over, didn't I?"

"But you haven't got anything I haven't got," said Penrod indifferently. "I know everything that's in your yard and in your stable, and there isn't a thing——"

"I didn't say it was in the yard or in the stable, did I?"

"Well, there ain't anything in your house," returned Penrod frankly, "that I'd walk two feet to look at—not a thing!"

"Oh, no!" Sam assumed mockery. "Oh, no, you wouldn't! You know what it is, don't you? Yes, you do!"

Penrod's curiosity stirred somewhat.

"Well, all right," he said, "I got nothin' to do. I just as soon go. What is it?"

"You wait and see," said Sam, as they climbed the fence. "I bet *your* ole eyes'll open pretty far in about a minute or so!"

"I bet they don't. It takes a good deal to get me excited, unless it's sumpthing mighty——"

"You'll see!" Sam promised.

He opened an alley gate and stepped into his own yard in a manner signaling caution—though the exploit, thus far, certainly required none—and Penrod began to be impressed and hopeful. They entered the house, silently, encountering no one, and Sam led the way upstairs, tiptoeing, implying unusual and increasing peril. Turning, in the upper hall, they went into Sam's father's bedroom, and Sam closed the door with

a caution so genuine that already Penrod's eyes began to fulfill his host's prediction. Adventures in another boy's house are trying to the nerves; and another boy's father's bedroom, when invaded, has a violated sanctity that is almost appalling. Penrod felt that something was about to happen—something much more important than he had anticipated.

Sam tiptoed across the room to a chest of drawers, and, kneeling, carefully pulled out the lowest drawer until the surface of its contents—Mr. Williams' winter underwear—lay exposed. Then he fumbled beneath the garments and drew forth a large object, displaying it triumphantly to the satisfactorily dumbfounded Penrod.

It was a blue-steel Colt's revolver, of the heaviest pattern made in the Seventies. Mr. Williams had inherited it from Sam's grandfather (a small man, a deacon, and dyspeptic) and it was larger and more horrible than any revolver either of the boys had ever seen in any picture, moving or stationary. Moreover, greenish bullets of great size were to be seen in the chambers of the cylinder, suggesting massacre rather than mere murder. This revolver was Real and it was Loaded!

Both boys lived breathlessly through a magnificent moment.

"Leave me have it!" gasped Penrod. "Leave me have hold of it!"

"You wait a minute!" Sam protested, in a whisper. "I want to show you how I do."

"No; you let me show you how *I* do!" Penrod insisted; and they scuffled for possession.

"Look out!" Sam whispered warningly. "It might go off."

"Then you better leave me have it!" And Penrod, victorious and flushed, stepped back, the weapon in his grasp. "Here," he said, "this is the way I do: You be a crook; and suppose you got a dagger, and I——"

"I don't want any dagger," Sam protested, advancing. "I want that revolaver. It's my father's revolaver, ain't it?"

"Well, *wait* a minute, can't you? I got a right to show you the way I *do*, first, haven't I?" Penrod began an improvization on the spot. "Say I'm comin' along after dark like this—look, Sam! And say you try to make a jump at me——"

"I won't!" Sam declined this rôle impatiently. "I guess it ain't *your* father's revolaver, is it?"

"Well, it may be your father's but it ain't yours," Penrod argued, becoming logical. "It ain't either's of us revolaver, so I got as much right——"

"You haven't either. It's my fath——"

"*Watch*, can't you—just a minute!" Penrod urged vehemently. "I'm not goin' to keep it, am I? You can have it when I get through, can't you? Here's

how *I* do: I'm comin' along after dark, just walkin' along this way—like this—look, Sam!"

Penrod, suiting the action to the word, walked to the other end of the room, swinging the revolver at his side with affected carelessness.

"I'm just walkin' along like this, and first I don't see you," continued the actor. "Then I kind of get a notion sumpthing wrong's liable to happen, so I—— No!" He interrupted himself abruptly. "No; that isn't it. You wouldn't notice that I had my good ole revolaver with me. You wouldn't think I had one, because it'd be under my coat like this, and you wouldn't see it." Penrod stuck the muzzle of the pistol into the waistband of his knickerbockers at the left side and, buttoning his jacket, sustained the weapon in concealment by pressure of his elbow. "So you think I haven't got any; you think I'm just a man comin' along, and so you——"

Sam advanced. "Well, you've had your turn," he said. "Now, it's mine. I'm goin' to show you how I——"

"*Watch* me, can't you?" Penrod wailed. "I haven't showed you how *I* do, have I? My goodness! Can't you watch me a minute?"

"I *have* been! You said yourself it'd be my turn soon as you——"

"My goodness! Let me have a *chance,* can't you?" Penrod retreated to the wall, turning his right side toward Sam and keeping the revolver still protected

under his coat. "I got to have my turn first, haven't I?"

"Well, yours is over long ago."

"It isn't either! I——"

"Anyway," said Sam decidedly, clutching him by the right shoulder and endeavoring to reach his left side—"anyway, I'm goin' to have it now."

"You said I could have my turn out!" Penrod, carried away by indignation, raised his voice.

"I did not!" Sam, likewise lost to caution, asserted his denial loudly.

"You did, too."

"You said——"

"I never said anything!"

"You said—— Quit that!"

"Boys!" Mrs. Williams, Sam's mother, opened the door of the room and stood upon the threshold. The scuffling of Sam and Penrod ceased instantly, and they stood hushed and stricken, while fear fell upon them. "Boys, you weren't quarreling, were you?"

"Ma'am?" said Sam.

"Were you quarreling with Penrod?"

"No, ma'am," answered Sam in a small voice.

"It sounded like it. What was the matter?"

Both boys returned her curious glance with meekness. They were summoning their faculties—which were needed. Indeed, these are the crises which prepare a boy for the business difficulties of his later life.

Penrod, with the huge weapon beneath his jacket, insecurely supported by an elbow and by a waistband which he instantly began to distrust, experienced distressful sensations similar to those of the owner of too heavily insured property carrying a gasoline can under his overcoat and detained for conversation by a policeman. And if, in the coming years, it was to be Penrod's lot to find himself in that precise situation, no doubt he would be the better prepared for it on account of this present afternoon's experience under the scalding eye of Mrs. Williams. It should be added that Mrs. Williams's eye was awful to the imagination only. It was a gentle eye and but mildly curious, having no remote suspicion of the dreadful truth, for Sam had backed upon the chest of drawers and closed the damnatory open one with the calves of his legs.

Sam, not bearing the fatal evidence upon his person, was in a better state than Penrod, though when boys fall into the stillness now assumed by these two, it should be understood that they are suffering. Penrod, in fact, was the prey to apprehension so keen that the actual pit of his stomach was cold.

Being the actual custodian of the crime, he understood that his case was several degrees more serious than that of Sam, who, in the event of detection, would be convicted as only an accessory. It was a lesson, and Penrod already repented his selfishness in not allowing Sam to show how he did, first.

"You're sure you weren't quarreling, Sam?" said Mrs. Williams.

"No, ma'am; we were just talking."

Still she seemed dimly uneasy, and her eyes swung to Penrod.

"What were you and Sam talking about, Penrod?"

"Ma'am?"

"What were you talking about?"

Penrod gulped invisibly.

"Well," he murmured, "it wasn't much. Different things."

"What things?"

"Oh, just sumpthing. Different things."

"I'm glad you weren't quarreling," said Mrs. Wiliams, reassured by this reply, which, though somewhat baffling, was thoroughly familiar to her ear. "Now, if you'll come downstairs, I'll give you each one cookie and no more, so your appetites won't be spoiled for your dinners."

She stood, evidently expecting them to precede her. To linger might renew vague suspicion, causing it to become more definite; and boys preserve themselves from moment to moment, not often attempting to secure the future. Consequently, the apprehensive Sam and the unfortunate Penrod (with the monstrous implement bulking against his ribs) walked out of the room and down the stairs, their countenances indicating an interior condition of solemnity. And a curious shade of behavior might have here interested a crim-

inologist. Penrod endeavored to keep as close to Sam as possible, like a lonely person seeking company, while, on the other hand, Sam kept moving away from Penrod, seeming to desire an appearance of aloofness.

"Go into the library, boys," said Mrs. Williams, as the three reached the foot of the stairs. "I'll bring you your cookies. Papa's in there."

Under her eye the two entered the library, to find Mr. Williams reading his evening paper. He looked up pleasantly, but it seemed to Penrod that he had an ominous and penetrating expression.

"What have you been up to, you boys?" inquired this enemy.

"Nothing," said Sam. "Different things."

"What like?"

"Oh—just different things."

Mr. Williams nodded; then his glance rested casually upon Penrod.

"What's the matter with your arm, Penrod?"

Penrod became paler, and Sam withdrew from him almost conspicuously.

"Sir?"

"I said, What's the matter with your arm?"

"Which one?" Penrod quavered.

"Your left. You seem to be holding it in an unnatural position. Have you hurt it?"

Penrod swallowed. "Yes, sir. A boy bit me—I mean a dog—a dog bit me."

Mr. Williams murmured sympathetically: "That's too bad! Where did he bite you?"

"On the—right on the elbow."

"Good gracious! Perhaps you ought to have it cauterized."

"Sir?"

"Did you have a doctor look at it?"

"No, sir. My mother put some stuff from the drug store on it."

"Oh, I see. Probably it's all right, then."

"Yes, sir." Penrod drew breath more freely, and accepted the warm cookie Mrs. Williams brought him. He ate it without relish.

"You can have only one apiece," she said. "It's too near dinner-time. You needn't beg for any more, because you can't have 'em."

They were good about that; they were in no frame of digestion for cookies.

"Was it your own dog that bit you?" Mr. Williams inquired.

"Sir? No, sir. It wasn't Duke."

"Penrod!" Mrs. Williams exclaimed. "When did it happen?"

"I don't remember just when," he answered feebly. "I guess it was day before yesterday."

"Gracious! How did it——"

"He—he just came up and bit me."

"Why, that's terrible! It might be dangerous for other children," said Mrs. Williams, with a solicitous

glance at Sam. "Don't you know whom he belongs to?"

"No'm. It was just a dog."

"You poor boy! Your mother must have been dreadfully frightened when you came home and she saw——"

She was interrupted by the entrance of a middle-aged colored woman. "Miz Williams," she began, and then, as she caught sight of Penrod, she addressed him directly, "You' ma telefoam if you here, send you home right away, 'cause they waitin' dinner on you."

"Run along, then," said Mrs. Williams, patting the visitor lightly upon his shoulder; and she accompanied him to the front door. "Tell your mother I'm so sorry about your getting bitten, and you must take good care of it, Penrod."

"Yes'm."

Penrod lingered helplessly outside the doorway, looking at Sam, who stood partially obscured in the hall, behind Mrs. Williams. Penrod's eyes, with a veiled anguish, conveyed a pleading for help as well as a horror of the position in which he found himself. Sam, however, pale and determined, seemed to have assumed a stony attitude of detachment, as if it were well understood between them that his own comparative innocence was established, and that whatever catastrophe ensued, Penrod had brought it on and must bear the brunt of it alone.

"Well, you'd better run along, since they're wait-

ing for you at home," said Mrs. Williams, closing the door. "Good-night, Penrod."

. . . Ten minutes later Penrod took his place at his own dinner-table, somewhat breathless but with an expression of perfect composure.

"Can't you *ever* come home without being telephoned for?" demanded his father.

"Yes, sir." And Penrod added reproachfully, placing the blame upon members of Mr. Schofield's own class, "Sam's mother and father kept me, or I'd been home long ago. They would keep on talkin', and I guess I had to be *polite*, didn't I?"

His left arm was as free as his right; there was no dreadful bulk beneath his jacket, and at Penrod's age the future is too far away to be worried about. The difference between temporary security and permanent security is left for grown people. To Penrod, security was security, and before his dinner was half eaten his spirit had become fairly serene.

Nevertheless, when he entered the empty carriage-house of the stable, on his return from school the next afternoon, his expression was not altogether without apprehension, and he stood in the doorway looking well about him before he lifted a loosened plank in the flooring and took from beneath it the grand old weapon of the Williams family. Nor did his eye lighten with any pleasurable excitement as he sat himself down in a shadowy corner and began some sketchy experiments with the mechanism. The

allure of first sight was gone. In Mr. Williams' bedchamber, with Sam clamoring for possession, it had seemed to Penrod that nothing in the world was so desirable as to have that revolver in his own hands—it was his dream come true. But, for reasons not definitely known to him, the charm had departed; he turned the cylinder gingerly, almost with distaste; and slowly there stole over him a feeling that there was something repellent and threatening in the heavy blue steel.

Thus does the long-dreamed Real misbehave—not only for Penrod!

More out of a sense of duty to bingism in general than for any other reason, he pointed the revolver at the lawn-mower, and gloomingly murmured, "Bing!"

Simultaneously, a low and cautious voice sounded from the yard outside, "Yay, Penrod!" and Sam Williams darkened the doorway, his eye falling instantly upon the weapon in his friend's hand. Sam seemed relieved to see it.

"You didn't get caught with it, did you?" he said hastily.

Penrod shook his head, rising.

"I guess not! I guess I got *some* brains around me," he added, inspired by Sam's presence to assume a slight swagger. "They'd have to get up pretty early to find any good ole revolaver, once I got *my* hands on it!"

"I guess we can keep it, all right," Sam said confidentially. "Because this morning papa was putting on his winter underclothes and he found it wasn't there, and they looked all over and everywhere, and he was pretty mad, and said he knew it was those cheap plumbers stole it that mamma got instead of the regular plumbers he always used to have, and he said there wasn't any chance ever gettin' it back, because you couldn't tell which one took it, and they'd all swear it wasn't them. So it looks like we could keep it for our revolaver, Penrod, don't it? I'll give you half of it."

Penrod affected some enthusiasm. "Sam, we'll keep it out here in the stable."

"Yes, and we'll go huntin' with it. We'll do lots of things with it!" But Sam made no effort to take it, and neither boy seemed to feel yesterday's necessity to show the other how he did. "Wait till next Fourth o' July!" Sam continued. "Oh, oh! Look out!"

This incited a genuine spark from Penrod.

"Fourth o' July! I guess she'll be a little better than any firecrackers! Just a little 'Bing! Bing! Bing!' she'll be goin'. 'Bing! Bing! Bing!'"

The suggestion of noise stirred his comrade. "I'll bet she'll go off louder'n that time the gas-works blew up! I wouldn't be afraid to shoot her off *any* time."

"I bet you would," said Penrod. "You aren't used to revolavers the way I——"

"You aren't, either!" Sam exclaimed promptly. "I

wouldn't be any more afraid to shoot her off than you would."

"You would, too!"

"I would not!"

"Well, let's see you then; you talk so much!" And Penrod handed the weapon scornfully to Sam, who at once became less self-assertive.

"I'd shoot her off in a minute," Sam said, "only it might break sumpthing if it hit it."

"Hold her up in the air, then. It can't hurt the roof, can it?"

Sam, with a desperate expression, lifted the revolver at arm's length. Both boys turned away their heads, and Penrod put his fingers in his ears—but nothing happened. "What's the matter?" he demanded. "Why don't you go on if you're goin' to?"

Sam lowered his arm. "I guess I didn't have her cocked," he said apologetically, whereupon Penrod loudly jeered.

"Tryin' to shoot a revolaver and didn't know enough to cock her! If I didn't know any more about revolavers than that, I'd——"

"There!" Sam exclaimed, managing to draw back the hammer until two chilling clicks warranted his opinion that the pistol was now ready to perform its office. "I guess she'll do all right to suit you *this* time!"

"Well, why'n't you go ahead, then; you know so much!" And as Sam raised his arm, Penrod again

turned away his head and placed his forefingers in his ears.

A pause followed.

"Why'n't you go ahead?"

Penrod, after waiting in keen suspense, turned to behold his friend standing with his right arm above his head, his left hand over his left ear, and both eyes closed.

"I can't pull the trigger," said Sam indistinctly, his face convulsed as in sympathy with the great muscular efforts of other parts of his body. "She won't pull!"

"She won't?" Penrod remarked with scorn. "I'll bet *I* could pull her."

Sam promptly opened his eyes and handed the weapon to Penrod.

"All right," he said, with surprising and unusual mildness. "You try her, then."

Inwardly discomfited to a disagreeable extent, Penrod attempted to talk his own misgivings out of countenance.

"Poor 'ittle baby!" he said, swinging the pistol at his side with a fair pretense of careless ease. "Ain't even strong enough to pull a trigger! Poor 'ittle baby! Well, if you can't even do that much, you better watch me while *I*——"

"Well," said Sam reasonably, "why don't you go on and do it then?"

"Well, I *am* goin' to, ain't I?"

"Well, then, why don't you?"

"Oh, I'll do it fast enough to suit *you,* I guess," Penrod retorted, swinging the big revolver up a little higher than his shoulder and pointing it in the direction of the double doors, which opened upon the alley. "You better run, Sam," he jeered. "You'll be pretty scared when I shoot her off, I guess."

"Well, why don't you *see* if I will? I bet you're afraid yourself."

"Oh, I am, am I?" said Penrod, in a reckless voice —and his finger touched the trigger. It seemed to him that his finger no more than touched it; perhaps he had been reassured by Sam's assertion that the trigger was difficult. His intentions must remain in doubt, and probably Penrod himself was not certain of them; but one thing comes to the surface as entirely definite—that trigger was not so hard to pull as Sam said it was.

Bang! Wh-a-a-ack. A shattering report split the air of the stable and there was an orifice of remarkable diameter in the alley door. With these phenomena, three yells, expressing excitement of different kinds, were almost simultaneous—two from within the stable and the third from a point in the alley about eleven inches lower than the orifice just constructed in the planking of the door. This third point, roughly speaking, was the open mouth of a gayly dressed young colored man whose attention, as he strolled, had been thus violently distracted from some mental computations he was making in numbers, including,

particularly, those symbols of ecstasy or woe, as the case might be, seven and eleven. His eye at once perceived the orifice on a line enervatingly little above the top of his head; and, although he had not supposed himself so well known in this neighborhood, he was aware that he did, here and there, possess acquaintances of whom some such uncomplimentary action might be expected as natural and characteristic. His immediate procedure was to prostrate himself flat upon the ground, against the stable doors.

In so doing, his shoulders came brusquely in contact with one of them, which happened to be unfastened, and it swung open, revealing to his gaze two stark-white white boys, one of them holding an enormous pistol and both staring at him in stupor of ultimate horror. For, to the glassy eyes of Penrod and Sam, the stratagem of the young colored man, thus dropping to earth, disclosed, with awful certainty, a slaughtered body.

This dreadful thing raised itself upon its elbows and looked at them, and there followed a motionless moment—a tableau of brief duration, for both boys turned and would have fled, shrieking, but the body spoke:

"'At's a nice business!" it said reproachfully. "Nice business! Tryin' blow a man's head off!"

Penrod was unable to speak, but Sam managed to summon the tremulous semblance of a voice.

"Where—where did it hit you?" he gasped.

"Nemmine anything 'bout where it *hit* me," the young colored man returned, dusting his breast and knees as he rose. "I want to know what kine o' white boys you think you is—man can't walk 'long street 'thout you blowin' his head off!" He entered the stable and, with an indignation surely justified, took the pistol from the limp, cold hand of Penrod. "Whose gun you playin' with? Where you git 'at gun?"

"It's ours," quavered Sam. "It belongs to us."

"Then you' pa ought to be 'rested," said the young colored man. "Lettin' boys play with gun!" He examined the revolver with an interest in which there began to appear symptoms of a pleasurable appreciation. "My goo'ness! Gun like 'iss blow a team o' steers thew a brick house! *Look* at 'at gun!" With his right hand he twirled it in a manner most dexterous and surprising; then suddenly he became severe. "You white boy, listen me!" he said. "Ef I went an did what I *ought* to did, I'd march straight out 'iss stable, git a policeman, an' tell him 'rest you an' take you off to jail. 'At's what you need—blowin' man's head off! Listen me: I'm goin' take 'iss gun an' th'ow her away where you can't do no mo' harm with her. I'm goin' take her way off in the woods an' th'ow her away where can't nobody find her an' go blowin' man's head off with her. 'At's what I'm goin' do!" And placing the revolver inside his coat as inconspicuously as possible, he proceeded to the

open door and into the alley, where he turned for a final word. "I let you off 'iss one time," he said, "but listen me—you listen, white boy: you bet' not tell you' pa. *I* ain' goin' tell him, an' *you* ain' goin' tell him. He want know where gun gone, you tell him you los' her."

He disappeared rapidly.

Sam Williams, swallowing continuously, presently walked to the alley door, and remarked in a weak voice, "I'm sick at my stummick." He paused, then added more decidedly: "I'm goin' home. I guess I've stood about enough around here for one day!" And bestowing a last glance upon his friend, who was now sitting dumbly upon the floor in the exact spot where he had stood to fire the dreadful shot, Sam moved slowly away.

The early shades of autumn evening were falling when Penrod emerged from the stable; and a better light might have disclosed to a shrewd eye some indications that here was a boy who had been extremely, if temporarily, ill. He went to the cistern, and, after a cautious glance round the reassuring horizon, lifted the iron cover. Then he took from the inner pocket of his jacket an object which he dropped listlessly into the water: it was a bit of wood, whittled to the likeness of a pistol. And though his lips moved not, nor any sound issued from his vocal organs, yet were words formed. They were so deep in the person of Penrod they came almost from the slowly convalescing

profundities of his stomach. These words concerned firearms, and they were:

"Wish I'd never seen one! Never want to see one again!"

X.—Concho Curly at the Op'ra*

By Edward Beecher Bronson

EARLY in July, 1882, I made my first beef shipment of that season, from Ogallala to Chicago. I sent Concho Curly ahead in charge of the first train-load, and myself followed with the second. While to me uneventful, for Curly the trip was big with interest.

Bred and reared in Menard County, on a little tributary of the Concho River that long stood the outermost line of settlement in central west Texas, Curly was about as raw a product as the wildest mustang ranging his native hills. Seldom far off his home

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range before the preceding year's trail drive, never in a larger city than the then small town of Fort Worth, for Curly Chicago was nothing short of a wilderness of wonders. His two days' stay there left him awed and puzzled.

It was the second morning of our return journey before I could get much out of him. Before that he had sat silent, in a brown study, answering only in monosyllables anything I said to him.

At length, however, another friendly inquiry developed what he was worrying about.

"Come, come, Curly!" I said, "tell us what you saw. Had a good time, didn't you?"

"Wall, I should *re*mark. Them short-horns is junin' round so thick back thar a stray long-horn hain't no sorta show to git to know straight up from sideways 'fore he gits plumb lost in them deep cañons whar all th' sign is tramped out an' thar's no trees to blaze for back-tracking yourself.

"What they-all gits to live on is the mysteriousest mystery to me; don't raise or grow nothin'; got no grass, or cows to graze on her ef they had her. 'Course some of them's got spondulix their daddies left them, an' can buy; th' rest—wall, mebbe so th' rest is jest nachally cannibiles, an' eats up each other."

And how nearly Curly was right about the "cannibiles"—at least, metaphorically—he doubtless never learned.

"But, Curly," I asked, "didn't you have any fun?

Must have hit up the theaters a few, didn't you, eh!"

"Wall, I should say I shore did," he replied. "I shore went to a the-*a*-ter, but she didn't get my funny-bone busy none."

"Why, Curly," I asked, "how's that?"

"Wall, you see it's thisaway. When you turned me loose down to th' stockyards, I axed th' commission man what was th' ring-tailedest lally-cooler of a hotel in town, an' he tells me she's th' Palmer House.

"Then I ropes a kid an' hobbles him with four bits long enough to run me through th' milling herd of short-horns as fer as th' Palmer.

"On th' way I stops to a store an' buys a new hat, an' a pair o' high-heel boots, an' a new suit, shirt, an' red handkerchief, an' a little ol' humany war sack with a handle on her, an' inter her I puts my belt an' spurs.

"Then, when I gets fixed up jest like them city folks, I pikes along to th' Palmer, an' in I goes.

"An' she was a shore lally-cooler all right! More prittys about th' fixin' up o' that house that I'd allowed anything but a woman could pack.

"Wall, when I got in I axed for Mr. Palmer, an' a little feller in sorta soldier-brass-button-clothes runs me up to a little close pen with a fence round her slicker than airy bar in Fort Worth—all glass an' shiny wood an' dandy stones. In that thar pen was a quick-talkin', smart-aleck feller, with a di'mond big as a engin' head-light staked out in th' middle of his bald-faced shirt.

"That feller shore rubbed my hair th' wrong way th' minute he shot his mouth off, with:

" 'Wall, what kin I do for you, young feller?'

" '*You* cain't do a ding thing for me, Mr. Man,' I ups an' tells him. 'Hain't got nairy business with pikers like you-all. I don't git to Chicago often, but when I do I plays with nothin' but blue chips, an' bets th' limit every whirl.'

" 'Wall, what do you want, anyway?' he jerks out

" 'Want to see Mr. Palmer; got some p'rticular business with him,' says I.

" 'Sorry, sir,' says he, 'Mr. Palmer ain't around this time of day. Is your business with him private?'

" 'I reckon she *are* private,' says I; 'want to see him an' find out ef I kin git to stay all night in this yere *ho*tel of his'n.'

"An' I reckon about that time that thar smart aleck must o' thought of somethin' powerful funny that'd happened lately, for right thar he broke out laughin' fit to kill his fool self—jest nachally laughed till he like to died.

"When finally he comes to, he up an' says:

" 'Why, I *sometimes* attend to business like that for Mr. Palmer; guess I can fix you. Here, write your name down there.'

"An' he whirls round in front of me a whopper of a big book that 'peared to have a lot other fellers' names in. She shore looked s'spicious to me, an' I says:

" 'Now see here, Mr. Man, my name don't draw no big lot of money, but she shorely don't get fastened to any dociments I don't *sabe*.'

"Then that blasted idiot thought o' somethin' else so plumb funny he lites in laughin' agin till he nigh busts.

"When he gits out o' his system all the laugh she cain't hold easy, he tells me th' big book is jest nothin' but a tally they use to count you in when you comes to stay to th' hotel an' to count you out when you goes.

"That didn't look onreasonable none to me, so I says:

" 'Son, she goes.'

"An' when he hands me a writin' tool, not noticin' she wa'n't a pencil, I sticks her in my mouth to git her ready to write good, an' gits my dod-burned mouth so full of ink I reckon 'tain't all out yet; an' while I was writin' in th' book, 'Stonewall Jackson Kip, Deadman Ranch, Nebraska,' Mr. Man he slips off behind a big safe and empties out a few more laughs he couldn't git to hold longer.

"An' does you know, ol' man, this mornin' I been gittin' a sort of a s'spicion that Palmer piker was laughin' at me inkin' my mouth, maybe; blamed lucky I didn't see it then, or I'd shore leaded him a few.

"Wall, when Mr. Man had got done *ex*aminin' my turkey tracks in the book, he gits a key an' comes back, hits a bell, an' hollers, 'Front!' Then, when one o'

them little soldier-button fellers comes runnin', an' th' piker passes him th' key an' sings out, 'Gentleman to No. 1492!' th' kid he makes a dive for my war sack. But you bet your *alce* I grabs him *pronto*, an' says:

"'See here, son, they ain't more'n about two million worth o' valuables in that thar war sack, so I wouldn't be broke none ef you ducked with her; but I reckon Stonewall's strong enough to pack his'n without th' help of no sawed-off like you-all.'

"Then Mr. Kid he up an' chases me over to a railroad car that's built on tracks runnin' straight up in th' air plumb to th' top of th' house, an' into her we gits—all free, you *sabe*; didn't have to buy no ticket.

"Wall, sir, when th' feller ridin' her socked in th' spurs, that thar car humped herself once or twice an' then hit a gait that would make a U. P. *ex*press look like she was standin' still, an' in less time than Nebo takes to draw a gun, thar we was at th' top floor, about a mile higher, I reckon, than folks was ever meant to live.

"An' say! By cripes! when I come to look out o' th' winder in my room, I thought I'd have to stake myself to th' bed to be safe. Lookin' out was jest like lookin' down from th' top o' Laramie Peak on th' spread of th' main range—little ol' peaks an' deep cañons everywhere, with signal-fires throwin' up smoke columns from every peak, like Injuns signalin'

news. She shore looked a rough country to try to make any short cuts across.

"When I'd got washed up some, I sticks my gun in my waist-band an' goes out an' down to th' ground on that little ol' upstandin' railroad, an' axes one o' them soldier boys th' trail to the grub-pile. He grins some an' takes me into a room so pow'ful big and crowded with folks I allowed 'bout everybody in town must be eatin' there.

"Soon as I got sot down, here comes a coon an' hands me a printed sheet bigger'n th' *Llano Weekly Clarion.* An' when I told him I was much obliged, but I'd come to eat an' not to read, blamed ef that thar coon didn't think o' somethin' so funny he nigh split hisself. 'Pears like mos' everybody has a most onusual lot of laugh in 'em back thar.

"Wall, bein' dod-burned hungry, an' allowin' I'd have a bang-up feed, an' rememberin' you Yankees talkin' on th' round-up 'bout what slick eatin' lobsters makes, I tells th' coon to bring me a dozen lobsters an' a cup of coffee.

" 'Wha-what's dat you say, boss? How many lobsters does you want?' says th' coon.

" 'A plumb dozen, you black hash-slinger!' says I, 'an' hump yourself *pronto,* for my tape-worm's hollerin' for fodder.'

"Off slides Mr. Coon, lookin' at me sorta scared-like outen th' corner o' his off eye, to the far end o' th' room.

"Wall, thar I set for about twenty minutes, hopin' lobsters was bigger'n oysters an' wonderin' ef I'd ordered enough to fill up me an' th' worm, when, lookin' up, here comes up th' room a p'rcession of twelve niggers, each nigger carryin' a plate about half th' size of a saddle-blanket, an' on each plate a whale of a big red critter, most all laigs an' claws, that looked like a overgrowed Gila monster with war-paint on.

"An' when th' lead coon stops in front of me an' says, 'Here's your dozen lobsters, sir,' I jest nachally nigh fell dead right thar, knowin' Stonewall was up agin it harder'n ever before in his life.

"Say! I never wanted a cayuse so bad in my life; ef I had one I'd shore have skipped—forked him an' split the scenery open gittin' away from them war-painted animiles—but thar I was afoot!

"So I bunches up my nerve an' says:

" 'Say, coon, I done expected a bunch of th' boys to feed with me, but they hain't showed up. Me an' th' worm will tackle a pair of them red jaspers, an' you fellers put the other ten where they cain't git away till th' boys comes.'

"Then, not lettin' on to th' city chaps settin' an' grinnin' all round me that I wa'n't raised in th' same lot with lobsters, I takes my knife an' fork an' lites in to go to eatin', when I'll just be eternally hanged if I didn't nigh go crazy to find them critturs was jest nachally *all* hoofs an' horns—nairy a place on 'em

from end to end airy human's jaws could ever git to feed on.

"An' I was about to jerk my gun an' shoot one apart to find out what his insides was like, when a feller settin' next showed me how to knock th' horns off an' git at th' meat proper.

"Then me an' th' worm got busy good an' plenty, for th' meat was sweeter an' tenderer even than 'possum.

"Before we got done we shore chambered five of them animiles, an' when I paid th' bill an' sashayed out, it was with *re*grets I didn't have my war sack handy to pack off th' rest in.

"Come evenin', I moseyed up to Mr. Man's pen an' axed him what was th' finest, highest-priced show in town, an' he told me she was to a the-*a*-ter called th' Op'ra.

"So out I goes, an' ropes another kid an' gits him to steer me to her.

"Arrived to th' the-*a*-ter, I prances up to th' ticket-wagon an' says, sorta reckless:

" 'Pardner, jest hand me out a dociment for th' best place to set in you got; price is no object. It's th' *best* in your show for Stonewall,' privately allowin' to myself he might stick me up for as much as a dollar and a half.

"At that he whispers to me. 'Twenty-five dollars,' jest as easy an' nat'rel, without turnin' a hair or ap-

pearin' any more *ex*cited than Dunc. Blackburn sticking up a stage-coach.

"Twenty-fi-five plunks to git to set a hour or so to see a little ol' fool play-actin'! I'll just be hornswiggled if that wa'n't goin' some for Stonewall! Nigh three weeks' wages to git to 'ante an' come in,' an' no tellin' what raises he'd have to stand after drawin' cards!

"However, allowin' I'd take a chance, I skinned off five fives from my little ol' bank-roll and passes 'em over to Mr. Holdup, an' then he picks up an' shuffles a deck of little cards an' deals me off six of them.

"Course I didn't know whatever his game was, makin' me a dead foul deal deliberate thataway, but knowin' she spelled trouble, I shoves one of th' cards back to him an' says:

" 'Mr. Holdup, I don't know jest what liberties a gentleman is allowed to take with a deck back here, but out West whar I come from a feller caught in a pot with more'n five cards in his hand is generally buried th' next day, an' bein' as all his business in this world ain't quite settled yet, five cards will do your Uncle Stonewall.'

"Couldn't make out anyway what he give me all them dociments for, unless one o' th' coons down to th' hotel had tipped him off my bunch of lobster-eaters was liable to drop in an' want to set with me.

"Wall, then I dropped into th' stream o' folks

flowin' in thro' th' door, all jammin' an' crowdin' like a bunch of wild steers, an' drifted inside.

"Was you ever to that Op'ra The-*a*-ter, ol' man? By cripes! but she was shore a honey-cooler for big! Honest, th' main corral would hold a full trail herd of three thousand head easy.

"Wall, when I gits in, a young feller in more soldier-buttons axes to see my cards, an' then he steers me down thro' a narrow chute runnin' along one side of th' big corral to a little close-pen, with a low fence in front, right down to one end of where they was play-actin', an' right atop of th' band.

"Dead opposite was a high stack of little pens like mine, all full of folks—same, I reckon, above me—an' then back further three or four big pens, one above the other, over where you come in.

"An' mebbe so them pens wa'n't packed none! Don't believe thar was a empty corner anywhere except mine. Jest packed everywhere with men and women.

"Th' men all looked alike, an' most of th' women Stonewall could a liked.

"Th' men all had on black clothes, with bald-faced shirts to match their bald heads.

"Th' women—wall, the feller that couldn't get suited in that bunch needn't wear out no leather huntin' round outside. An' thar was a lot of them honey-coolers settin' close round me that kept lookin' up my way

an' laughin' so sorta friendly like that it shore got to be real sociable.

"Wall, sir, that band was playin' to beat any band *you* ever heard—horns an' fiddles an' drums; horns that worked like a accordeon, pullin' in an' out; ol' mossback he-fiddles that must a been more'n a hundred years old to git to grow so big; drums with bellies big an' round as your mammy's soap kettle; an' th' boss music-maker on a perch in th' middle of th' bunch, shakin' a little *carajo* pole to beat the brains out any of th' outfit that wa'n't workin' to suit him.

"Some of th' tunes was sweet an' slow enough so you could follow 'em afoot, but most of 'em was so fast a feller'd need to be runnin' 'em on his top-cutting horse to git close enough to tell if they was real music or jest a hullabaloo big noise.

"But what s'rprised me most, ol' man, was to find that that thar the-*a*-ter was built up round one of the roughest, rockiest, wildest pieces of country I ever saw outside th' Black Hills, it layin' in th' end whar they was play-actin'. It shore looked like a side cañon up nigh th' head-waters of Rapid Creek, big boulders, an' pines, an' cliffs, an' a fall carryin' as much water as Deadman Creek.

"An' weather! Say, that little ol' the-*a*-ter cañon could put up a worse storm than you or me ever see in the Rockies. She was thunderin' and lightenin' till I was dead sure we was all in for a water-spout, an' I reckon one must a come after I left.

"I always thought the-*a*-ters was built to be funny in, but that one was jest nachally full o' hell's own grief as long as I got to stay in her. Nothin' doin' but sufferin' an' murderin' meanness.

"Plumb alone, an' lost in th' cañon, I reckon, was a pore little gal, 'bout sixteen year old, leanin' on a stump close up to whar I was settin', an' sobbin' fit to kill herself. She had 'bout next to nothin' on, an' was that ga'nted up an' lean 'peared like she was nigh starved to death.

"An' thar she hung an' cried an' cried till it 'peared to me some o' th' women folks ought to a gone to her; but they-all never noticed none, an' went right on gassin' with their fellers.

"Finally, when she got so weak I thought she was goin' to drop, out from behind a boulder slips a great big feller—all hair an' whiskers but his laigs, for he had on nothin' but a fur huntin'-shirt comin' halfway to his knees—an' in his hand he carries a long *bilduque* skelping-knife.

" 'Fore I realized he meant trouble, he makes a jump an' grabs th' gal by th' shoulder an' shakes her scandalous, an' while he's shakin' he's sorta half-talkin' an' half-singin' to her in some kind of talk so near like Spanish I thought I could ketch some of it.

"By cripes! but that feller was hot good an' plenty over something he claimed she'd did.

"An' when, half-sobbin' an' singin', she 'peared to be tellin' him she hadn't, an' to go off an' let her alone,

he shook an' abused her more'n ever, till it struck me it was about time for neighborin' men folks to hop in an' take a hand, for it was plumb plain she was a pore, sweet-faced, innercent little crittur that couldn't done no harm to a hummin' bird.

" 'Bout that time, Mr. Hairyman he hops back a step or two, stands an' scowls an' grits his teeth at th' gal for a minute, an' then he raises his knife, sorta crouches for a jump, an' sings out, near as I could make it out:

" '*Maudite! Folle! Folle! Say fini!*'

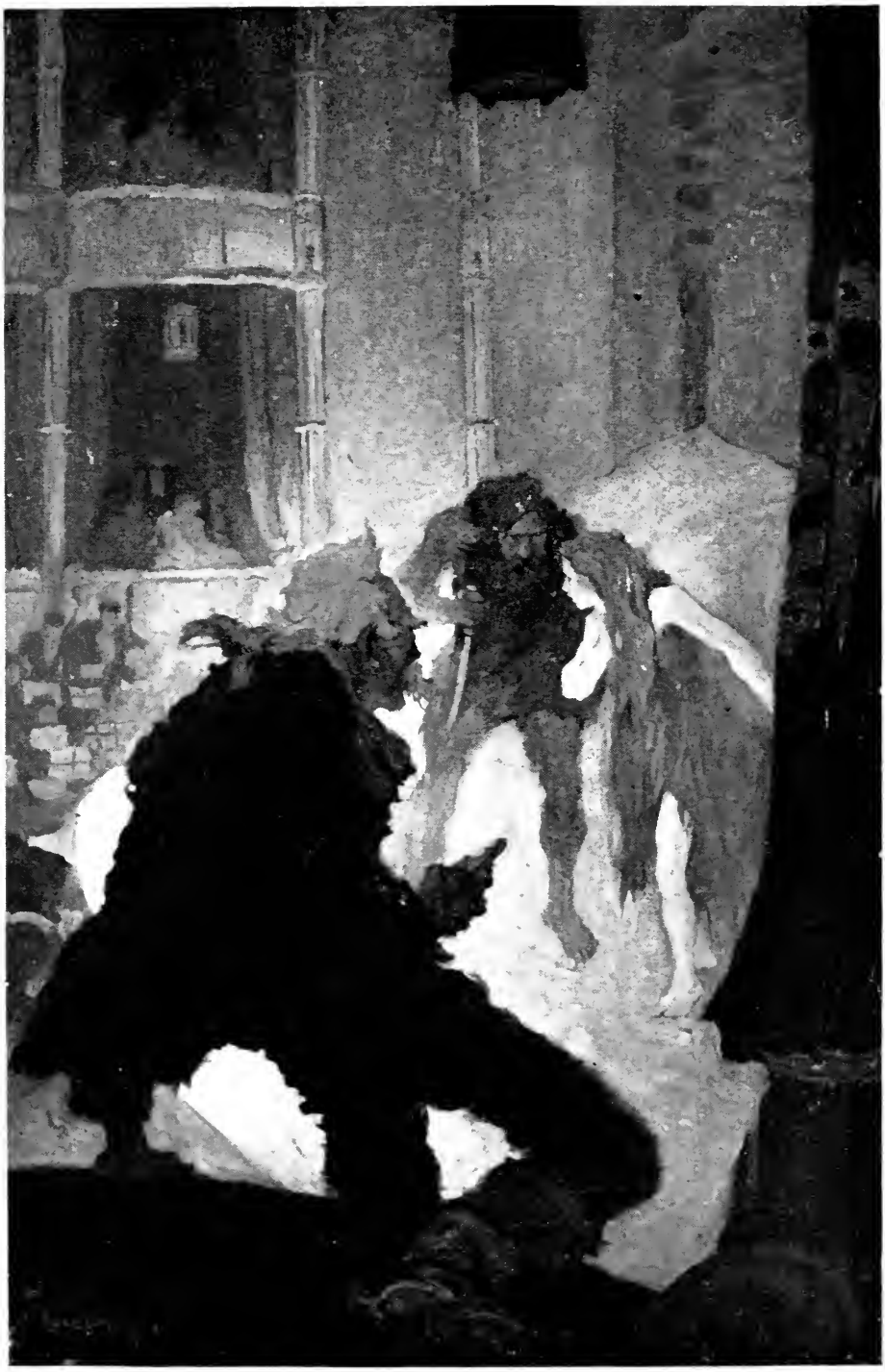
"But before he could lite on her with his knife, I hopped out of my close-pen into the cañon, jammed my .45 in his ear, an' observes:

" 'Mr. Hairyman, you're a liar, an' it's Stonewall Kip, of Concho, tellin' you!'

" 'Little *Maudy* thar *ain't* full, an' she don't have to *say* airy a thing she don't want to; an' if you don't pull your freight sudden for th' brush, I'll shore shoot six different kinds of meanness outen your low-down murderin' carcass!'

"Th' way his whiskers skipped over boulders makin' his getaway was some active, while th' pore little gal she jest drops off in a dead faint an' lays thar till some folks comes down the gulch an' carries her off.

"Then I takes th' kink outen th' hammer of my gun, sticks her in my waist-band, an' climbs back an' gits my hat—havin' had more'n enough of such blasted Op'ra The-*a*-ters.



"BUT BEFORE HE COULD LITE ON HER WITH HIS KNIFE, I HOPPED OUT OF MY CLOSE-PEN INTO THE CAÑON"

"An' while I was driftin' through the chute toward the main gate of th' big pen, to git out, there was th' blamedest cheerin', yellin', an' hand-clappin' you ever heard away from a stump-speakin', but whatever she was all about Stonewall didn't stop to ax."

XI.—The Lie*

By Hermann Hagedorn

"DID you prepare this lesson, Burton?"

Burton, big, athletic, handsome as a movie hero—hesitated a second before he answered. He was busy picking up a pad which lay under his seat.

He deposited the pad on the wide armrest and looked up inquiringly as though he had not fully comprehended the question. Mr. Beaver, the algebra teacher, was smiling his friendly and slightly irritating smile.

"I asked you, Burton," he repeated gently, "whether you had prepared. Did you?"

"Yes, sir," answered Burton.

"Thank you," said Mr. Beaver. He opened a certain terrifying little black book and made a dot in the lower left-hand corner of a certain square opposite the name of Burton. "Perhaps," he added, "you had

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better go over it again," and smiled the same smile, which would have been sardonic but for the mildness of his tone.

Burton sank glumly back in his seat.

Mr. Beaver regarded his little book studiously for a moment. Then he looked up. The smile was gone. The alert face, adequately adorned by a reddish beard fading into gray, was now solicitous.

"Harrington," he said.

A Fourth Former in the middle row stood up. He was slight and rather pallid, and it was evident that he should begin shaving without further delay, for there was already a shadow of fuzz on his cheeks and chin that made him look unwashed and rather weak. His mother, who was vain, had insisted that he postpone shaving. She could not bear to think that she was the mother of a son who was almost a man, she always said. It made her feel so old.

Harrington, sallow and unshorn, was not an inspiring sight. Mr. Beaver evidently thought so. His eyes were unquestionably serious.

"Harrington," he said, "it seems that you are another of our weak brethren this morning. Did you prepare your lesson?"

Again, the second's hesitation. Harrington turned a shade paler, if possible. Then, with an effort, he spoke.

"No, sir."

"I was afraid not," said Mr. Beaver making another

cryptic dot. Then he smiled. Harrington writhed and the rest of the class, except Burton, laughed. "Why not?"

"I—I was ill."

Mr. Beaver was at once sympathetic, though serious. "Did you report to Dr. Stevens?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"I knew he had already gone."

"You were ill after ten o'clock?"

"Yes, sir."

Again Mr. Beaver smiled. "But surely you might have done your algebra before ten o'clock?"

"I was—busy, sir."

"With other lessons?"

Harrington hesitated.

"With other lessons?" Mr. Beaver repeated.

"No, sir."

"Well?"

"I had a spread."

There was a roar from the other boys.

"Quiet!" said Mr. Beaver. "Now, Harrington, as I understand the situation," he continued mildly, "you failed to prepare your lesson because you were ill in consequence of a spread which it was against the rules to indulge in. Is that it?"

"Y—yes, sir."

"Professor is very much opposed to—illicit spreads, as you know"—("Professor" was the Headmaster)

—"I am afraid this will mean about thirty demerits, therefore. You have other demerits?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many?"

"Twenty."

Mr. Beaver closed his little book and stood a moment by his desk looking quietly over at Harrington. His face was serious, but even his victim could not help feeling that there was a certain affectionate sympathy behind the quiet sternness.

"Look out, Harrington," he said at last with a return of that curious smile of his. "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and the milestones are always spreads—of one sort or another. You may sit down."

The boy sat down and the work of the class proceeded. Two boys, for widely divergent reasons, heard the other boys go through their paces as though it were all a bad dream of wriggling *x*'s and *y*'s like snakes darting in and out of the placid waters of Mr. Beaver's endless questioning.

The bell clanged at last, indicating the end of the period. Three or four boys went forward to confer with Mr. Beaver about certain vexing algebraic problems. Needless to say, neither Burton nor Harrington was among these. They drifted out into the cloister with the rest of the class, having certain problems of their own, not algebraic. One or two boys addressed Burton and were rebuffed with a curt word, which was

unusual, as Burton was almost painstakingly friendly to everybody.

"Say!" whispered one to the other, "Burton's got a grouch on. He's sour at Beaver, I guess."

"Beaver is awfully fresh sometimes. After all, Bill Burton's captain of the football team."

"He's a good deal more important to the school than Beaver'll ever be."

"That's no joke either."

The two boys parted. Neither ventured to intrude again upon Burton's sacred resentment. For Burton was a very great man at The Towers.

No one spoke to Harrington. No one cared whether he had a grouch or not. For Harrington was a new boy who had as yet failed to "fit in." He was emphatically not an athlete. But he was not a "sissy" either. He was quite as emphatically not a student nor a literary light; but he was as quick as a jack rabbit in his physics "lab" work and not to be scorned as a guesser in reading Cæsar at sight. He was not openly religious—which kept him out of the Y. M. C. A. But, on the other hand, in a quiet way, he deeply loved the out of doors, and that love, like all love, is a kind of worship of God. Harrington was unquestionably "hard to place." The boys as well as the masters, when they spoke about him at all, agreed on that. The only pigeon-hole into which he seemed to fit was the pigeon-hole of the "Queer Dicks." His

first name happened to be Richard, which helped to settle the classification.

Burton passed through the West Wing, being a Sixth Former, with a room on the top floor of the New Building, and, chewing his lips, crossed the wide level lawn—with its strip of bright green grass that showed where the hot water pipes ran—and disappeared through a door in the western end.

Harrington did not go to his room. Young men who get demerits were not privileged at The Towers to study in their own rooms. They spent periods not occupied with recitations in the school room, a long room containing some two hundred desks, with a raised platform and an organ at the southern end; the place had once been used as the school chapel and was still used for the morning song-service which enlivened the daily grind. Plaster busts of the great of all ages, from Homer to Longfellow, peered from their plaster brackets. There was a verse also on the southern walls:

> So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man:
> When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
> The Youth replies, I can.

Dick Harrington didn't like that verse. In fact, he thought it was rot. He disliked even more the black tablets on the opposite wall containing in gilt letters at least four inches high the names of the exemplary youths who in their time had been Heads

of School. And in this place, surrounded by Models of Good Conduct, he was supposed to study four, five and sometimes six hours a day! Two hundred bent forms and Mr. Watrous, the day's jail-keeper, wandering aimlessly about, pretending not to be the spy that he was! Altogether, the schoolroom was a horror.

Harrington bent over his desk like the rest and pretended to study French. But he did not study. He did a little mathematical problem instead. Twenty demerits and thirty demerits made fifty demerits. And fifty demerits meant probation, and probation meant that he could not go to Chancellor's Hill to see the big game to-morrow afternoon. That was a tragedy. All the autumn the game with Chancellor's Hill had been held before him by the old boys as the last word in thrills; for a week there had been talk of nothing else. You would have thought that the final whistle of that game was going to bring the heavens crashing down on creation. No one seemed to be planning anything beyond that Saturday afternoon. The general notion seemed to be that if The Towers won, the rapture of that victory would make any trial thereafter bearable; and if The Towers lost—well, torture and death would, in comparison, be sweet.

And now, he, Dick Harrington, who loved thrills as much as any man, was not to see the game. For days his nerves had been at a sharp tension of anticipation. Now suddenly they relaxed, leaving him weak

and despairing. Life had lost its meaning. Of course, the game would be held anyway, and there would be the excitement of getting the telegraphic reports at the end of the periods; but the real thrills would all be at Chancellor's Hill; and he would be at The Towers.

He luxuriated in misery; he reveled in despair. Just because of a bit of a spread with Sammy Oakes and Chet Burrowes, just because of one unprepared lesson! Of course there had been other spreads before this fatal one; and of course there had been one or two unprepared lessons also—therefore the original twenty demerits. But why ruin a boy's happiness forever because of a missed recitation?

Dick Harrington was exceedingly sorry for himself.

His indignation was violent while it lasted but it did not last long, for there was sharp regret of another sort hovering all the while at the rim of his consciousness. It was a regret not so pleasant to indulge as the other. He had been made the butt—the laughing stock—of the algebra class. He tingled and flushed at the memory of it. Bill Burton had also flunked his lesson; but Burton had been able to say that he had at least prepared it, and the whole proceeding had been dignified and everybody loved and admired Burton all the more because with all his greatness he was just like other boys about lessons.

But he, Dick Harrington, had been disgraced. And in the presence of William Burton!

That, after all, was the hardest thing to swallow. That was worse than missing the game with Chancellor's Hill. For Dick Harrington worshiped Bill Burton, because he was physically and socially everything that Dick never could hope to be. He was the school's crack athlete, the president of the Sixth Form, the chairman of the Student Council, the president of the Y. M. C. A. He was the One Great Hero of the boys, and the Headmaster himself consulted him whenever he had a knotty problem of boy-nature to solve. Before Dick had been at school a week, he knew that he would rather find favor with "Colonel" Burton than see his name in gold letters in the schoolroom, or, for that matter, on the Common Room tablets, where the athletic records are kept. "The Colonel" was rather used to adoration, and, being human, liked it. But he was no more attentive to this particular adorer than to any one else, which intensified Dick Harrington's "case."

Dick did not study much French on that morning in late October. For suddenly a new, insidious question jumped into the forefront of his thoughts: Why had he blurted out everything to Mr. Beaver? *Why hadn't he just lied?*

That question thrust at the very roots of life, and Dick Harrington knew it. He went cold and hot by

turns. Somehow it had never occurred to him to lie. He did not know why. It was possibly because his father was such a shining figure of truthfulness personified. He remembered something he had overheard his mother say to his father a long time ago—"I never realized until I married you that it is really awful to lie."

Was it really so awful? A lie in time certainly simplified life a lot. And as long as it did not hurt anybody else—what was really the difference? A goody-goody Sunday-school teacher had told him, when he was five, that the lightning would smite him if he told a lie. Whereupon he had told a lie deliberately during the course of the next thunderstorm to test Mr. Goody-Goody's veracity, and proved *him* a liar, first thing.

Staring at French irregular verbs, Dick clenched his hands, trying to figure it all out. Suddenly, forgetting where he was, he pounded the desk-top with his left fist. Then he gave a yowl which rang through the schoolroom, providing exhilarating diversion to two hundred lifted heads. For in his cogitations his right hand had clutched the edge of the desk on which the top closed.

He explained the accident to Mr. Watrous, who proved skeptical, though the Spy was forced to admit that the hand looked red enough to hurt.

The schoolroom settled again into quiet. The excitement, from start to finish, had covered about ninety

seconds. No one suspected that the unshaven, disheveled boy was, in that studious, quiet place, having his first great wrestle with life.

The football team, accompanied by the coaches, the Headmaster Brewster and his wife, a half-dozen masters, and the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Forms almost in a body, in auto-hacks and horse-hacks, on foot and by trolley, departed for the railroad station and Chancellor's Hill next morning at eight, to the sound of cheers.

Dick Harrington stood in the great Archway with the Lower School and a handful of other boys, like himself on probation (or just "broke"), cheering the school, the team, "The Colonel," the manager, the school, the team, and again and again "The Colonel," until the last boy was out of sight. The team was hopeful of victory; the school was confident of it. But "The Colonel's" face was curiously grave. He smiled and joked; now and then he tossed some gay piece of derision into the crowd of woe-begone stay-at-homes. But the gravity remained in the eyes all the while. Harrington saw it, and it occurred to him that it was natural that the Captain of The Towers football team should feel the weight of a great responsibility; he was quite sure that "Colonel" Burton had never seemed to him so heroic as to-day. There was no question about it. There was an unusual nobility in Bill Burton's eyes and in the carriage of

his head. But there was also a curious impression of suffering there and about the lips. Dick saw Mrs. Brewster look at Burton with a friendly, somewhat quizzical, smile. Then in two minutes the fortunate ones were gone and The Towers became a St. Helena, where a chill wind played shrilly all day long around corners of buildings and in and out the cloisters.

Lessons that morning were a gloom and dinner in the huge, half empty dining-room offered an opportunity to satisfy the boy's hunger and—that was all. As a social function it was a flat failure. Everybody talked of the game, as wrecked sailors drifting in an open boat talked of shore. Life was unreal somehow, everything so empty, so quiet. If, as some one had once remarked, The Towers was a very furnace of flaming life and energy—some one had certainly dumped the grate.

The game was to be called at Chancellor's Hill at one-thirty; and at one-thirty the first stragglers appeared in the chilly Archway to take their position at the bulletin board, where the score was to be posted as it came along the wire.

Dick Harrington, in sweater and cap, arrived at one-forty-five. The first score had just been posted:

Chancellor's Hill..... 5
The Towers 0

The Headmaster's secretary, a studious but otherwise attractive young man, who posted the notice,

volunteered the information that the Chancellor's Hill left end had turned the trick with a fifty-five yard run when The Towers eleven had tied itself into a knot through a jumbled signal.

"That's an awful beginning!" said Runt Woods, who was standing next to Dick Harrington. He was a little, flat-faced, brownie sort of boy, whom everybody loved. "Must have been in the first five minutes of play."

"They won't get any more," Dick answered confidently. "It's too bad they scored, but they won't get any more."

His optimism was unwarranted. There was a long wait without news. Then Mr. Tuttle, the secretary, reappeared from the Main Building, wearing a rueful smile. He picked up the eraser under the bulletin board, but he did not disturb the zero which stood to the credit (or debit) of The Towers. He rubbed out the 5 that followed Chancellor's Hill and set down 11.

"Something's happened!" cried Dick.

"Two touchdowns and a goal have happened," said Runt Woods gloomily.

"I don't mean that. I mean that something's happened to the team! Lost their heads, or something."

He wondered whether "The Colonel" had been taken ill. "The Colonel" was so completely the heart and soul of the team. If for some reason he were out of it——

They must be playing the second period by now. There was another long wait. Then at last Mr. Tuttle, looking grave, reappeared.

At the edge of the Archway, he stopped. "Don't mob me, now," he said, trying to grin.

"What's the score? Score!" cried a hundred voices.

"End of the second period," he said, striding toward the board. "Score 11 to 0."

Groans, loud and prolonged.

The wind whistled through the Archway. The boys stuck their hands in their pockets and danced, shivering, but not one deserted the bulletin board. They stared at the dismal figures and a dozen versions of How It Must Have Happened were launched by imaginative spectators, attacked ruthlessly and torpedoed as improbable. The trouble with the whole matter of explaining Chancellor's Hill's two touchdowns was that the very fact of the touchdowns would, an hour ago, have seemed the last word in improbabilities. They talked and shivered and bantered and sang and cheered (just to keep warm) for a solid hour. Mr. Tuttle reappeared at last.

The boys surged out of the Archway into the Quadrangle to meet him.

"Score! What's the score?"

"Get back, you wild Indians!" cried the studious secretary to some importunate First Formers who

were tugging at his arms. "There is no news, and I can't get Chancellor's Hill on the telephone."

There were murmurs of bewilderment. The Senior Master, tall, genial, and conspicuous for his good sense, came out of the Main Building, and suggested a run for health's sake. He tagged Runt Woods lightly and was off. With a shout the crowd followed him at a jog-trot past the Music House, past the Cottage out on to the cinder track. They jogged a quarter-mile.

As they reached the Cottage on the return trip, they saw Mr. Tuttle dancing toward them, wildly waving his arms.

The Senior Master halted his band.

"Fifteen to eleven!" shouted Mr. Tuttle ecstatically. "We win!"

The roar that followed was memorable. Eppie, the confectionery man, picking his teeth in his empty shop at the foot of the hill, threw away his toothpick and went to the kitchen to tell his wife that The Towers had won, and business for the rest of the afternoon would be brisk.

Two minutes later the jubilant invasion began. Dick Harrington was not one of the crowd that rushed, cheering down the hill. He was on probation, and Eppie's was out of bounds.

He stood in the Archway, lonely and miserable.

Why hadn't he lied?

The team was due back at Hainesburg, the railroad station for The Towers, at eight-thirty. One or two Sixth Formers, flushed and almost incoherent with excitement, had asked the Senior Master for permission to organize a torchlight parade.

"Sure enough! Good idea!" exclaimed the Senior Master. "Go to it! Don't burn yourselves up, don't get lost, don't get in the way of the train and don't all have apoplectic fits as my friend Andrew here is promising to do shortly if some one doesn't put an ice compress on his enthusiasm. But go on. Give 'em a good time."

"Thank you ever so much, sir!" cried Andrew, "and I'll promise to cool off."

"Go 'way!' cried the Senior Master cheerfully. "You don't know how. You're a perpetual human Roman candle."

"I'll hold him down, sir," said the other boy.

"Pshaw!" cried the Senior Master. "You're a Whiz-bang yourself—go 'long! Shoo!"

The boys went.

At eight, Dick Harrington made his way to the Study to ask the Senior Master whether boys "on probe" could join the triumphal procession. The Senior Master was kindly, but firm.

"Sorry, old man," he said. "Probe rules hold."

That was all. But Dick Harrington without a word went to his room on the third floor of the East Wing, stumbling on the stairs, because of the tears.

Why, he asked himself bitterly again and again—*why hadn't he lied?*

He crept out of his room an hour later, hearing the cheers of the returning revelers. His hallway was utterly deserted, the school was deserted. If he needed any further evidence that virtue did not pay, here it was. *"Be good and you'll be lonesome."* There was one aphorism proved, at least.

Suddenly, standing in the Quadrangle, he heard singing. Then through the bare branches he saw the glow of many torches. It was all magical and mysterious, for the wild cheering which had brought him down from his room had given way to a solemn exaltation of triumph. If he had had a hat on his head, he would have pulled it off, hearing the school song sung that way. He felt a tug at his heart and again the dimness covered his eyes because he should be fated to have no active part in that thrilling chorus of victory.

He stood quite still, swallowing hard. At the end of the first stanza, there was a "regular yell" for The Towers, as the procession turned sharply, with torches flaring, up the steep drive. He could see now that they were dragging a hay-wagon with ropes. The team was on the hay-wagon. The second stanza of the school song floated up to him, it seemed a chant drifting over from fairyland.

The procession came nearer now. The hill and the hay-wagon together proved too much for the singers

and the song died off in breathless laughter and another cheer. Then somebody started to call off the score: "One—two—three—four—" to a climactic burst—"Fifteen!' The procession disappeared behind the Main Building only to reappear a minute or two later around the corner of the Office, on the other side of the Archway. Dick Harrington wished that he had enough manly pride to scorn it all and go back to his room. But he didn't, so he rushed to where the crowd was gathered and listened in rapture to the cheers and the speeches and the songs and all the wonderful stories of a wonderful game.

"Colonel" Burton was there, smiling embarrassed appreciation. *He* had won the game for The Towers, when it seemed hopelessly lost. Every one agreed to that. He made a speech, thanking everybody for everything.

Why, oh, why, Dick cried to himself, as he climbed three flights after "creams" a half-hour later—*Why hadn't he had the sense to lie?*

Dick Harrington crept into bed, and his roommate crept into bed. The roommate slept and Dick Harrington tried to sleep, but sleep eluded him—it seemed for hours. Perhaps it was only for fifteen or twenty minutes. Then he too slept, dreaming of torchlit chariots.

He woke and gave a low cry. Some one was sitting on his bed. He started to jump up, scared through;

but a strong hand touched his shoulder and a friendly voice whispered—"It's all right, Harrie; don't be scared."

Dick was still half asleep and dazed. "Who are you?" he cried in an unnatural voice.

"It's Bill Burton."

"Who?" he asked, amazed.

"Bill Burton."

"You're somebody trying to fool me," Dick whispered after a pause.

"No, I'm not, Harrie," said the other's deep, rich voice. "I wanted to talk to you. I couldn't wait until to-morrow, so I got permission from Prof. and here I am."

"What makes you want to see me?" asked Dick softly. "I guess I don't understand at all. I didn't think you knew me."

"You remember yesterday in the Algebra class?"

"You bet I remember," whispered Dick emphatically.

There was a moment's utter quiet. From away over in the direction of Chicken Hill came the sound of a rumpus in the Black Belt of Hainesburg. Then again quiet.

Burton spoke at last, slowly and rather more softly than before. "Beaver asked you and me the same question, you remember?"

"Yes," murmured Dick, breathlessly.

"You told him the truth."

HE WOKE AND GAVE A LOW CRY. SOME ONE WAS SITTING ON HIS BED

"I just blurted out a lot of——"

"Well, I *lied.*"

Somehow the shock of those words was to Dick Harrington like the impact of a terrible fist. He literally saw stars. The idea that "The Colonel" should tell a lie was inconceivable. Sneaks and cowards lied. His reeling standards straightened suddenly. His bitter regret that *he* hadn't had the sense to lie evaporated in the glow of an overwhelming gratitude. He could not speak.

"Harrie," Burton went on with a quiet depth of feeling which was not lost on Dick (for Dick had deep capabilities of sympathy himself if any one bothered to find it out). "You told the truth and I know what it cost you. I lied. And it took all the stuffin's out of me, Harrie. As soon as the lie was out, I felt I'd have given my head to have it back. You see, Harrie, quite apart from the right or wrong of it, it wouldn't have mattered if I had told the truth."

"It wouldn't?"

"No, I've had a fairly good record in class lately. But——"

"Why did you do it?"

"That's just it, old man. It was habit, I guess. It was just the line of least resistance. It was the quickest way out of a box—I didn't think, and bang! —first thing I knew I'd gone and done it! I'm a

good deal older than you, Harrie, I'm twenty-one. I was a pretty bad kid until Prof. and Mrs. Brewster got hold of me. I've managed to get most of the worst devils under. And I thought I had the lie-devil under. I haven't told a lie for two years. But I didn't have him under, Harrie. When I least expected him, there he was. I guess I haven't been as unhappy for a good many years as I was yesterday and to-day."

Dick Harrington floundered helplessly for words —"I never thought——"

"I was getting pretty cocky about my own goodness, I guess," Burton went on quietly. "That's why I got it in the neck this way. But it took the sand right out of me. It seemed that all the years of tussle were in vain and I wasn't worth a little yaller dog's respect, and here the school was looking to me to do big things. It took it right out of me, Harrie. Do you know what was the trouble with the first two periods of the game to-day?"

"The team lost their heads, and then you bucked 'em up and won the game. The fellows told me."

"That sounds good, old man. But the trouble was that I couldn't get my mind down on the game. I was all the time thinking of that algebra class and that lie. I thought of it out on the field and mixed up the plays. That was the reason for those two first periods."

Dick Harrington sat bolt upright. "Really? Really?" he exclaimed.

"Instead of trying to win the game, I was all the time trying to puzzle out what I could do to wipe out that Lie. It wasn't square to the team, it wasn't square to the school, but there it was. There was that Lie. I tried to laugh at myself, but that didn't do any good. There was that Lie. I tried to curse myself out, but that didn't do any good. There was that *Lie*, sitting in my heart."

Dick stared at him through the darkness with burning eyes. "Then what happened?" he cried in a low voice.

"I dunno exactly, Harrie," Burton answered, speaking very slowly. "Suddenly I just found that I was thinking of you."

"Of me?" There was awe in the exclamation.

"And then it was all clear. I had to square myself with you. Suddenly I knew that that was what would wipe out that Lie and give me a fresh start. It was like a sort of revelation. You see, Harrie, I knew that you thought I was pretty fine, and you just had to be set straight."

"I—I haven't changed my mind at all about you," said Dick Harrington timidly. "And you won the game after all."

Bill Burton leaned over the younger boy. His hand groped for Dick's shoulder and clutched it.

"I didn't win the game," he whispered tensely.

"The game wasn't really played at Chancellor's Hill at all. It was played in the algebra class. It was lost when I lied, and it was won a minute later when you told the truth. And I guess I'm pretty glad you told the truth."

"So am I," murmured Dick very softly.

They both breathed deeply. It had been a notable victory.

Next morning, between breakfast and Sunday service, Dick Harrington surreptitiously borrowed his roommate's safety razor, and shaved with shining eyes.

XII.—Story of the Bandbox

By Robert Louis Stevenson

UP to the age of sixteen, at a private school and afterward at one of those great institutions for which England is justly famous, Mr. Harry Hartley had received the ordinary education of a gentleman. At that period he manifested a remarkable distaste for study; and his only surviving parent being both weak and ignorant, he was permitted thenceforward to spend his time in the attainment of petty and purely elegant accomplishments. Two years later, he was left an orphan and almost a beggar. For all active and industrious pursuits, Harry was unfitted alike by nature and training. He could sing romantic ditties, and accompany himself with discretion on the piano; he was a graceful although a timid cavalier; he

had a pronounced taste for chess; and nature had sent him into the world with one of the most engaging exteriors than can well be fancied.

A fortunate chance and some influence obtained for Harry, at the time of his bereavement, the position of private secretary to Major-General Sir Thomas Vandeleur, C. B. Sir Thomas was a man of sixty, loud-spoken, boisterous, and domineering. For some reason, some service, the nature of which had been often whispered and repeatedly denied, the Rajah of Kashgar had presented this officer with the sixth largest known diamond of the world. The gift transformed General Vandeleur from a poor into a wealthy man, from an obscure and unpopular soldier into one of the lions of London society; the possessor of the Rajah's Diamond was welcome in the most exclusive circles; and he had found a lady, young, beautiful, and well-born, who was willing to call the diamond hers even at the price of marriage with Sir Thomas Vandeleur. It was commonly said at the time that, as like draws to like, one jewel had attracted another; certainly Lady Vandeleur was not only a gem of the finest water in her own person, but she showed herself to the world in a very costly setting; and she was considered by many respectable authorities as one among the three or four best-dressed women in England.

Harry's duty as secretary was not particularly onerous; but he had a dislike for all prolonged work;

it gave him pain to ink his fingers; and the charms of Lady Vandeleur and her toilets drew him often from the library to the boudoir. He had the prettiest ways among women, could talk fashions with enjoyment, and was never more happy than when criticizing a shade of ribbon, or running on an errand to the milliner's. In short, Sir Thomas' correspondence fell into pitiful arrears, and my lady had another lady's maid.

At last the general, who was one of the least patient of military commanders, arose from his place in a violent excess of passion, and indicated to his secretary that he had no further use for his services, with one of those explanatory gestures which are most rarely employed between gentlemen. The door being unfortunately open, Mr. Hartley fell down-stairs head foremost.

He arose somewhat hurt and very deeply aggrieved. The life in the general's house precisely suited him; he moved, on a more or less doubtful footing, in very genteel company, he did little, he ate of the best, and he had a lukewarm satisfaction in the presence of Lady Vandeleur.

Immediately after he had been outraged by the military foot, he hurried to the boudoir and recounted his sorrows.

"You know very well, my dear Harry," replied Lady Vandeleur, for she called him by name like a child or a domestic servant, "that you never by any

chance do what the general tells you. I shall be sorry to lose you, but since you cannot stay longer in a house where you have been insulted, I shall wish you good-bye, and I promise you to make the general smart for his behavior."

"My lady," said he, "what is an insult? I should think little indeed of any one who could not forgive them by the score. But to leave one's friends; to tear up the bonds of affection——"

He was unable to continue, for his emotion choked him, and he began to weep.

Lady Vandeleur looked at him with a curious expression.

"This little fool," she thought, "why should he not become my servant instead of the general's? He is good-natured, obliging, and understands dress; and besides, it will keep him out of mischief."

That night she talked over the general, who was already somewhat ashamed of his vivacity; and Harry was transferred to the feminine department, where his life was little short of heavenly. He was always dressed with uncommon nicety, wore delicate flowers in his button-hole, and could entertain a visitor with tact and pleasantry.

One fine morning he came into the drawing-room and began to arrange some music on the top of the piano. Lady Vandeleur, at the other end of the apartment, was speaking somewhat eagerly with her brother, Charlie Pendragon, an elderly young man,

much broken with dissipation and very lame of one foot. The private secretary, to whose entrance they paid no regard, could not avoid overhearing a part of their conversation.

"To-day or never," said the lady. "Once and for all, it shall be done to-day."

"To-day, it must be," replied the brother, with a sigh. "But it is a false step, a ruinous step, Clara; and we shall live to repent it dismally."

Lady Vandeleur looked her brother steadily and somewhat strangely in the face.

"You forget," she said; "the man must die at last."

"Upon my word, Clara," said Pendragon, "I believe you are the most heartless rascal in England."

"You men," she returned, "are so coarsely built, that you can never appreciate a shade of meaning. You are yourselves rapacious, violent, immodest, careless of distinction; and yet the least thought for the future shocks you in a woman. I have no patience with such stuff. You would despise in a common banker the imbecility that you expect to find in us."

"You are very likely right," replied her brother; "you were always cleverer than I. And, anyway, you know my motto: the family before all."

"Yes, Charlie," she returned, taking his hand in hers. "I know your motto better than you know it yourself. And 'Clara before the family!' Is not

that the second part of it? Indeed, you are the best of brothers, and I love you dearly."

Mr. Pendragon got up, looking a little confused by these family endearments.

"I had better not be seen," said he. "I understand my part to a miracle, and I'll keep an eye on the Tame Cat."

"Do," she replied. "He is an abject creature, and might ruin all."

She kissed the tips of her fingers to him daintily; and the brother withdrew by the boudoir and the back-stair.

"Harry," said Lady Vandeleur, turning toward the secretary as soon as they were alone. "I have a commission for you this morning. But you shall take a cab; I cannot have my secretary freckled."

She spoke the last words with emphasis and a look of half-motherly pride that caused great contentment to poor Harry; and he professed himself charmed to find an opportunity of serving her.

"It is another of our great secrets," she went on archly, "and no one must know of it but my secretary and me. Sir Thomas would make the saddest disturbance; and if you only knew how weary I am with these scenes! Oh, Harry, Harry, can you explain to me what makes you men so violent and unjust? But, indeed, I know you cannot; you are the only man in the world who knows nothing of these shameful passions; you are so good, Harry, and so

kind; you, at least, can be a woman's friend; and do you know? I think you make the others more ugly by comparison."

"It is you," said Harry, gallantly, "who are so kind to me. You treat me like——"

"Like a mother," interposed Lady Vandeleur. "I try to be a mother to you. Or, at least," she corrected herself with a smile, "almost a mother. I am afraid I am too young to be your mother really. Let us say a friend—a dear friend."

"But all this is beside our purpose," she resumed. "You will find a bandbox in the left-hand side of the oak wardrobe; it is underneath the pink slip that I wore on Wednesday with my Mechlin. You will take it immediately to this address," and she gave him a slip of paper, "but do not, on any account, let it out of your hands until you have received a receipt written by myself. Do you understand? Answer, if you please—answer! This is extremely important, and I must ask you to pay some attention."

Harry pacified her by repeating her instructions perfectly; and she was just going to tell him more when General Vandeleur flung into the apartment, scarlet with anger, and holding a long and elaborate milliner's bill in his hand.

"Will you look at this, madam?" cried he. "Will you have the goodness to look at this document? I know well enough you married me for my money, and I hope I can make as great allowance as any other

man in the service; but, as sure as God made me, I mean to put a period to this disreputable prodigality."

"Mr. Hartley," said Lady Vandeleur, "I think you understand what you have to do. May I ask you to see to it at once?"

"Stop," said the general, addressing Harry, "one word before you go." And then, turning again to Lady Vandeleur, "What is this precious fellow's errand?" he demanded. "I trust him no further than I do yourself, let me tell you. If he had as much as the rudiments of honesty, he would scorn to stay in this house; and what he does for his wages is a mystery to all the world. What is his errand, madam? and why are you hurrying him away?"

"I supposed you had something to say to me in private," replied the lady.

"You spoke about an errand," insisted the general. "Do not attempt to deceive me in my present state of temper. You certainly spoke about an errand."

"If you insist on making your servants privy to our humiliating dissensions," replied Lady Vandeleur, "perhaps I had better ask Mr. Hartley to sit down. No?" she continued; "then you may go, Mr. Hartley. I trust you may remember all that you have heard in this room; it may be useful to you."

Harry at once made his escape from the drawing-room; and as he ran upstairs he could hear the general's voice upraised in declamation, and the thin tones of Lady Vandeleur planting icy repartees at every

opening. How cordially he admired the wife! How skillfully she could evade an awkward question! with what secure effrontery she repeated her instructions under the very guns of the enemy! and on the other hand, how he detested the husband!

There had been nothing unfamiliar in the morning's events, for he was continually in the habit of serving Lady Vandeleur on secret missions, principally connected with millinery. There was a skeleton in the house, as he well knew. The bottomless extravagance and the unknown liabilities of the wife had long since swallowed her own fortune, and threatened day by day to ingulf that of the husband. Once or twice in every year exposure and ruin seemed imminent, and Harry kept trotting round to all sorts of furnishers' shops, telling small fibs, and paying small advances on the gross amount, until another term was tided over, and the lady and her faithful secretary breathed again. For Harry, in a double capacity, was heart and soul upon that side of the war; not only did he adore Lady Vandeleur and fear and dislike her husband, but he naturally sympathized with the love of finery, and his own single extravagance was at the tailor's.

He found the bandbox where it had been described, arranged his toilet with care, and left the house. The sun shone brightly; the distance he had to travel was considerable, and he remembered with dismay that the general's sudden interruption had prevented Lady

Vandeleur from giving him money for a cab. On this sultry day there was every chance that his complexion would suffer severely; and to walk through so much of London with a bandbox on his arm was a humiliation almost insupportable to a youth of his character. He paused, and took counsel with himself. The Vandeleurs lived in Eaton Place; his destination was near Notting Hill; plainly, he might cross the Park by keeping well in the open and avoiding populous alleys; and he thanked his stars when he reflected that it was still comparatively early in the day.

Anxious to be rid of his incubus, he walked somewhat faster than his ordinary, and he was already some way through Kensington Gardens when, in a solitary spot among trees, he found himself confronted by the general.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas," observed Harry, politely falling on one side; for the other stood directly in his path.

"Where are you going, sir?" asked the general.

"I am taking a little walk among the trees," replied the lad.

The general struck the bandbox with his cane.

"With that thing?" he cried; "you lie, sir, and you know you lie!"

"Indeed, Sir Thomas," returned Harry, "I am not accustomed to be questioned in so high a key."

"You do not understand your position," said the

general. "You are my servant, and a servant of whom I have conceived the most serious suspicions. How do I know but that your box is full of teaspoons?"

"It contains a silk hat belonging to a friend," said Harry.

"Very well," replied General Vandeleur. "Then I want to see your friend's silk hat. I have," he added, grimly, "a singular curiosity for hats; and I believe you know me to be somewhat positive."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas, I am exceedingly grieved," Harry apologized; "but indeed this is a private affair."

The general caught him roughly by the shoulder with one hand, while he raised his cane in the most menacing manner with the other. Harry gave himself up for lost; but at the same moment Heaven vouchsafed him an unexpected defender in the person of Charlie Pendragon, who now strode forward from behind the trees.

"Come, come, general, hold your hand," said he, "this is neither courteous nor manly."

"Aha!" cried the general, wheeling round upon his new antagonist, "Mr. Pendragon! And do you suppose, Mr. Pendragon, that because I have had the misfortune to marry your sister, I shall suffer myself to be dogged and thwarted by a discredited and bankrupt libertine like you? My acquaintance with Lady Van-

deleur, sir, has taken away all my appetite for the other members of her family."

"And do you fancy, General Vandeleur," retorted Charlie, "that because my sister has had the misfortune to marry you, she there and then forfeited her rights and privileges as a lady? I own, sir, that by that action she did as much as anybody could to derogate from her position; but to me she is still a Pendragon. I make it my business to protect her from ungentlemanly outrage, and if you were ten times her husband I would not permit her liberty to be restrained, nor her private messenger to be violently arrested."

"How is that, Mr. Hartley?" interrogated the general. "Mr. Pendragon is of my opinion, it appears. He, too, suspects that Lady Vandeleur has something to do with your friend's silk hat."

Charlie saw that he had committed an unpardonable blunder, which he hastened to repair.

"How, sir?" he cried; "I suspect, do you say? I suspect nothing. Only where I find strength abused and a man brutalizing his inferiors, I take the liberty to interfere."

As he said these words he made a sign to Harry, which the latter was too dull or too much troubled to understand.

"In what way am I to construe your attitude, sir?" demanded Vandeleur.

"Why, sir, as you please," returned Pendragon.

The general once more raised his cane, and made a cut for Charlie's head; but the latter, lame foot and all, evaded the blow with his umbrella, ran in, and immediately closed with his formidable adversary.

"Run, Harry, run!" he cried; "run, you dolt!"

Harry stood petrified for a moment, watching the two men sway together in this fierce embrace; then he turned and took to his heels. When he cast a glance over his shoulder he saw the general prostrate under Charlie's knee, but still making desperate efforts to reverse the situation; and the gardens seemed to have filled with people, who were running from all directions toward the scene of the fight. This spectacle lent the secretary wings, and he did not relax his pace until he had gained the Bayswater Road, and plunged at random into an unfrequented by-street.

To see two gentlemen of his acquaintance thus brutally mauling each other was deeply shocking to Harry. He desired to forget the sight; he desired, above all, to put as great a distance as possible between himself and General Vandeleur; and in his eagerness for this he forgot everything about his destination, and hurried before him headlong and trembling. When he remembered that Lady Vandeleur was the wife of one and sister of the other of these gladiators, his heart was touched with sympathy for a woman so distressingly misplaced in life. Even his own situation in the general's house looked hardly so pleasing as usual in the light of these violent transactions.

He had walked some little distance, busied with these meditations, before a slight collision with another passenger reminded him of the bandbox on his arm.

"Heavens!" cried he, "where was my head? and whither have I wandered?"

Thereupon he consulted the envelope which Lady Vandeleur had given him. The address was there, but without a name. Harry was simply directed to ask for "the gentleman who accepted a parcel from Lady Vandeleur," and if he were not at home to await his return. The gentleman, added the note, should present a receipt in the handwriting of the lady herself. All this seemed mighty mysterious, and Harry was above all astonished at the omission of the name and the formality of the receipt. He had thought little of this last when he heard it dropped in conversation; but reading it in cold blood, and taking it in connection with the other strange particulars, he became convinced that he was engaged in perilous affairs. For half a moment he had a doubt of Lady Vandeleur herself; for he found these obscure proceedings somewhat unworthy of so high a lady, and became more critical when her secrets were preserved against himself. But her empire over his spirit was too complete, he dismissed his suspicions, and blamed himself roundly for having so much as entertained them.

In one thing, however, his duty and interest, his generosity and his terrors, coincided—to get rid of the bandbox with the greatest possible dispatch.

He accosted the first policeman and courteously inquired his way. It turned out that he was already not far from his destination, and a walk of a few minutes brought him to a small house in a lane, freshly painted, and kept with the most scrupulous attention. The knocker and bell-pull were highly polished; flowering pot-herbs garnished the sills of the different windows; and curtains of some rich material concealed the interior from the eyes of curious passengers. The place had an air of repose and secrecy; and Harry was so far caught with this spirit that he knocked with more than usual discretion, and was more than usually careful to remove all impurity from his boots.

A servant-maid of some personal attractions immediately opened the door, and seemed to regard the secretary with no unkind eyes.

"This is the parcel from Lady Vandeleur," said Harry.

"I know," replied the maid, with a nod. "But the gentleman is from home. Will you leave it with me?"

"I cannot," answered Harry. "I am directed not to part with it but upon a certain condition, and I must ask you, I am afraid, to let me wait."

"Well," said she, "I suppose I may let you wait. I am lonely enough, I can tell you, and you do not look as though you would eat a girl. But be sure and do not ask the gentleman's name, for that I am not to tell you."

"Do you say so?" cried Harry. "Why, how strange! But, indeed, for some time back I walk among surprises. One question I think I may surely ask without indiscretion: Is he the master of this house?"

"He is a lodger, and not eight days old at that," returned the maid. "And now a question for a question: Do you know Lady Vandeleur?"

"I am her private secretary," replied Harry, with a glow of modest pride.

"She is pretty, is she not?" pursued the servant.

"Oh, beautiful!" cried Harry; "wonderfully lovely, and not less good and kind!"

"You look kind enough yourself," she retorted; "and I wager you are worth a dozen Lady Vandeleurs."

Harry was properly scandalized.

"I?" he cried. "I am only a secretary!"

"Do you mean that for me?" said the girl. "Because I am only a housemaid, if you please." And then, relenting at the sight of Harry's obvious confusion, "I know you mean nothing of the sort," she added; "and I like your looks; but I think nothing of your Lady Vandeleur. Oh, these mistresses!" she cried. "To send out a real gentleman like you—with a bandbox—in broad day!"

During this talk they had remained in their original positions—she on the doorstep, he on the sidewalk, bareheaded for the sake of coolness, and with

the bandbox on his arm. But upon this last speech Harry, who was unable to support such point-blank compliments to his appearance, nor the encouraging look with which they were accompanied, began to change his attitude, and glance from left to right in perturbation. In so doing he turned his face toward the lower end of the lane, and there, to his indescribable dismay, his eyes encountered those of General Vandeleur. The general, in a prodigious fluster of heat, hurry and indignation, had been scouring the streets in chase of his brother-in-law; but so soon as he caught a glimpse of the delinquent secretary his purpose changed, his anger flowed into a new channel, and he turned on his heel and came tearing up the lane with truculent gestures and vociferations.

Harry made but one bolt of it into the house, driving the maid before him; and the door was slammed in his pursuer's countenance.

"Is there a bar? Will it lock?" asked Harry, while a salvo on the knocker made the house echo from wall to wall.

"Why, what is wrong with you?" asked the maid. "Is it this old gentleman?"

"If he gets hold of me," whispered Harry, "I am as good as dead. He has been pursuing me all day, carries a sword-stick, and is an Indian military officer."

"These are fine manners," cried the maid. "And what, if you please, may be his name?"

"It is the general, my master," answered Harry. "He is after this bandbox."

"Did not I tell you?" cried the maid in triumph. "I told you I thought worse than nothing of your Lady Vandeleur; and if you had an eye in your head you might see what she is for yourself. An ungrateful minx, I will be bound for that!"

The general renewed his attack upon the knocker, and his passion growing with delay, began to kick and beat upon the panels of the door.

"It is lucky," observed the girl, "that I am alone in the house; your general may hammer until he is weary, and there is none to open for him. Follow me!"

So saying she led Harry into the kitchen, where she made him sit down, and stood by him herself in an affectionate attitude, with a hand upon his shoulder. The din at the door, so far from abating, continued to increase in volume, and at each blow the unhappy secretary was shaken to the heart.

"What is your name?" asked the girl.

"Harry Hartley," he replied.

"Mine," she went on, "is Prudence. Do you like it?"

"Very much," said Harry. "But hear for a moment how the general beats upon the door. He will certainly break it in, and then, in Heaven's name, what have I to look for but death?"

"You put yourself very much about with no oc-

casion," answered Prudence. "Let your general knock, he will do no more than blister his hands. Do you think I would keep you here if I were not sure to save you? Oh, no, I am a good friend to those that please me! and we have a back door upon another lane. But," she added, checking him, for he had got upon his feet immediately on this welcome news, "but I will not show where it is unless you kiss me. Will you, Harry?"

"That I will," he cried, remembering his gallantry, "not for your back door, but because you are good and pretty."

And he administered two or three cordial salutes, which were returned to him in kind.

Then Prudence led him to the back gate, and put her hand upon the key.

"Will you come and see me?" she asked.

"I will, indeed," said Harry. "Do not I owe you my life?"

"And now," she added, opening the door, "run as hard as you can, for I shall let in the general."

Harry scarcely required this advice; fear had him by the forelock; and he addressed himself diligently to flight. A few steps, and he believed he would return to Lady Vandeleur in honor and safety. But these few steps had not been taken before he heard a man's voice, hailing him by name with many execrations, and, looking over his shoulder, he beheld Charlie Pendragon waving him with both arms to re-

turn. The shock of this new incident was so sudden and profound, and Harry was already worked into so high a state of nervous tension, that he could think of nothing better than to accelerate his pace, and continue running. He should certainly have remembered the scene in Kensington Gardens; he should certainly have concluded that, where the general was his enemy, Charlie Pendragon could be no other than a friend. But such was the fever and perturbation of his mind that he was struck by none of these considerations, and only continued to run the faster up the lane.

Charlie, by the sound of his voice and the vile terms that he hurled after the secretary, was obviously beside himself with rage. He, too, ran his very best; but, try as he might, the physical advantages were not upon his side, and his outcries and the fall of his lame foot on the macadam began to fall further and further into the wake.

Harry's hopes began once more to arise. The lane was both steep and narrow, but it was exceedingly solitary, bordered on either hand by garden walls, overhung with foliage; and, for as far as the fugitive could see in front of him, there was neither a creature moving nor an open door. Providence, weary of persecution, was now offering him an open field for his escape.

Alas! as he came abreast of a garden door under a tuft of chestnuts, it was suddenly drawn back, and he could see inside, upon a garden path, the figure of a

butcher's boy with his tray upon his arm. He had hardly recognized the fact before he was some steps beyond upon the other side. But the fellow had had time to observe him; he was evidently much surprised to see a gentleman go by at so unusual a pace; and he came out into the lane and began to call after Harry with shouts of ironical encouragement.

His appearance gave a new idea to Charlie Pendragon, who, although he was now sadly out of breath, once more upraised his voice.

"Stop thief!" he cried.

And immediately the butcher's boy had taken up the cry and joined in the pursuit.

This was a bitter moment for the hunted secretary. It is true that his terror enabled him once more to improve his pace, and gain with every step on his pursuers; but he was well aware that he was near the end of his resources, and should he meet any one coming the other way, his predicament in the narrow lane would be desperate indeed.

"I must find a place of concealment," he thought, "and that within the next few seconds, or all is over with me in this world."

Scarcely had the thought crossed his mind than the lane took a sudden turning; and he found himself hidden from his enemies. There are circumstances in which even the least energetic of mankind learn to behave with vigor and decision; and the more cautious forget their prudence and embrace foolhardy resolu-

tions. This was one of those occasions for Harry Hartley; and those who knew him best would have been the most astonished at the lad's audacity. He stopped dead, flung the bandbox over a garden wall, and, leaping upward with incredible agility and seizing the copestone with his hands, he tumbled headlong after it into the garden.

He came to himself a moment afterward, seated in a border of small rosebushes. His hands and knees were cut and bleeding, for the wall had been protected against such an escalade by a liberal provision of old bottles; and he was conscious of a general dislocation and a painful swimming in the head. Facing him across the garden, which was in admirable order, and set with flowers of the most delicious perfume, he beheld the back of a house. It was of considerable extent, and plainly habitable; but, in odd contrast to the grounds, it was crazy, ill-kept, and of a mean appearance. On all other sides the circuit of the garden wall appeared unbroken.

He took in these features of the scene with mechanical glances, but his mind was still unable to piece together or draw a rational conclusion from what he saw. And when he heard footsteps advancing on the gravel, although he turned his eyes in that direction, it was with no thought either for defense or flight.

The newcomer was a large, coarse, and very sordid personage, in gardening clothes, and with a watering-pot in his left hand. One less confused would have

been affected with some alarm at the sight of this man's huge proportions and black and lowering eyes. But Harry was too gravely shaken by his fall to be so much as terrified; and if he was unable to divert his glances from the gardener, he remained absolutely passive, and suffered him to draw near, to take him by the shoulder, and to plant him roughly on his feet, without a motion of resistance.

For a moment the two stared into each other's eyes, Harry fascinated, the man filled with wrath and a cruel, sneering humor.

"Who are you?" he demanded at last. "Who are you to come flying over my wall and break my *Gloire de Dijons?* What is your name?" he added, shaking him; "and what may be your business here?"

Harry could not as much as proffer a word in explanation.

But just at that moment Pendragon and the butcher's boy went clumping past, and the sound of their feet and their hoarse cries echoed loudly in the narrow lane. The gardener had received his answer; and he looked down into Harry's face with an obnoxious smile.

"A thief!" he said. "Upon my word, and a very good thing you must make of it; for I see you dressed like a gentleman from top to toe. Are you not ashamed to go about the world in such a trim, with honest folk, I dare say, glad to buy your cast-off finery second-hand? Speak up, you dog," the man went on;

"you can understand English, I suppose; and I mean to have a bit of talk with you before I march you to the station."

"Indeed, sir," said Harry, "this is all a dreadful misconception; and if you will go with me to Sir Thomas Vandeleur's in Eaton Place, I can promise that all will be made plain. The most upright person, as I now perceive, can be led into suspicious positions."

"My little man," replied the gardener, "I will go with you no further than the station-house in the next street. The inspector, no doubt, will be glad to take a stroll with you as far as Eaton Place, and have a bit of afternoon tea with your great acquaintances. Or would you prefer to go direct to the home secretary? Sir Thomas Vandeleur, indeed! Perhaps you think I don't know a gentleman when I see one, from a common run-the-hedge like you? Clothes or no clothes, I can read you like a book. Here is a shirt that maybe cost as much as my Sunday hat; and that coat, I take it, has never seen the inside of Rag-fair, and then your boots——"

The man, whose eyes had fallen upon the ground, stopped short in his insulting commentary, and remained for a moment looking intently upon something at his feet. When he spoke his voice was strangely altered.

"What, in God's name," said he, "is all this?"

Harry, following the direction of the man's eyes, beheld a spectacle that struck him dumb with terror

and amazement. In his fall he had descended vertically upon the bandbox and burst it open from end to end; thence a great treasure of diamonds had poured forth, and now lay abroad, part trodden in the soil, part scattered on the surface in regal and glittering profusion. There was a magnificent coronet which he had often admired on Lady Vandeleur; there were rings and brooches, eardrops and bracelets, and even unset brilliants rolling here and there among the rosebushes like drops of morning dew. A princely fortune lay between the two men upon the ground—a fortune in the most inviting, solid, and durable form, capable of being carried in an apron, beautiful in itself, and scattering the sunlight in a million rainbow flashes.

"Good Heavens!" said Harry. "I am lost!"

His mind raced backward into the past with the incalculable velocity of thought, and he began to comprehend his day's adventures, to conceive them as a whole, and to recognize the sad imbroglio in which his own character and fortunes had become involved. He looked round him, as if for help, but he was alone in the garden, with his scattered diamonds and his redoubtable interlocutor; and when he gave ear, there was no sound but the rustle of the leaves and the hurried pulsation of his heart. It was little wonder if the young man felt himself a little deserted by his spirits, and with a broken voice repeated his last ejaculation:

"I am lost!"

The gardener peered in all directions with an air of guilt; but there was no face at any of the windows, and he seemed to breathe again.

"Pick up a heart," he said, "you fool! The worst of it is done. Why could you not say at first there was enough for two? Two!" he repeated, "ay, and for two hundred! But come away from here, where we may be observed; and, for the love of wisdom, straighten out your hat and brush your clothes. You could not travel two steps the figure of fun you look just now."

While Harry mechanically adopted these suggestions, the gardener, getting upon his knees, hastily drew together the scattered jewels and returned them to the bandbox. The touch of these costly crystals sent a shiver of emotion through the man's stalwart frame; his face was transfigured, and his eyes shone with concupiscence; indeed, it seemed as if he luxuriously prolonged his occupation, and dallied with every diamond that he handled. At last, however, it was done; and, concealing the bandbox in his smock, the gardener beckoned to Harry and preceded him in the direction of the house.

Near the door they were met by a young man evidently in holy orders, dark and strikingly handsome, with a look of mingled weakness and resolution, and very neatly attired after the manner of his caste. The gardener was plainly annoyed by this encounter; but

he put as good a face upon it as he could, and accosted the clergyman with an obsequious and smiling air.

"Here is a fine afternoon, Mr. Rolles," said he; "a fine afternoon, as sure as God made it! And here is a young friend of mine who had a fancy to look at my roses. I took the liberty to bring him in, for I thought none of the lodgers would object."

"Speaking for myself," replied the Reverend Mr. Rolles, "I do not; nor do I fancy any of the rest of us would be more difficult upon so small a matter. The garden is your own, Mr. Raeburn; we must none of us forget that; and because you give us liberty to walk there we should be indeed ungracious if we so far presumed upon your politeness as to interfere with the convenience of your friends. But, on second thoughts," he added, "I believe that this gentleman and I have met before. Mr. Hartley, I think. I regret to observe that you have had a fall."

And he offered his hand.

A sort of maiden dignity and a desire to delay as long as possible the necessity for explanation moved Harry to refuse this chance of help, and to deny his own identity. He chose the tender mercies of the gardener, who was at least unknown to him, rather than the curiosity and perhaps the doubts of an acquaintance.

"I fear there is some mistake," said he. "My name is Thomlinson, and I am a friend of Mr. Raeburn's."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Rolles. "The likeness is amazing."

Mr. Raeburn, who had been upon thorns throughout this colloquy, now felt it high time to bring it to a period.

"I wish you a pleasant saunter, sir," said he.

And with that he dragged Harry after him into the house, and then into a chamber on the garden. His first care was to draw down the blind, for Mr. Rolles still remained where they had left him, in an attitude of perplexity and thought. Then he emptied the broken bandbox on the table, and stood before the treasure, thus fully displayed, with an expression of rapturous greed, and rubbing his hand upon his thighs. For Harry, the sight of the man's face under the influence of this base emotion added another pang to those he was already suffering. It seemed incredible that, from his life of pure and delicate trifling, he should be plunged in a breath among sordid and criminal relations. He could reproach his conscience with no sinful act; and yet he was now suffering the punishment of sin in its most acute and cruel forms —the dread of punishment, the suspicions of the good, and the companionship and contamination of vile and brutal natures. He felt he could lay his life down with gladness to escape from the room and the society of Mr. Raeburn.

"And now," said the latter, after he had separated the jewels into two nearly equal parts, and drawn one

of them nearer to himself; "and now," said he, "everything in this world has to be paid for, and some things sweetly. You must know, Mr. Hartley, if such be your name, that I am a man of a very easy temper, and good nature has been my stumbling block from first to last. I could pocket the whole of these pretty pebbles, if I chose, and I should like to see you dare to say a word; but I think I must have taken a liking to you; for I declare I have not the heart to shave you so close. So, do you see, in pure kind feeling, I propose that we divide; and these," indicating the two heaps, "are the proportions that seem to me just and friendly. Do you see any objection, Mr. Hartley, may I ask? I am not the man to stick upon a brooch."

"But, sir," cried Harry, "what you propose to me is impossible. The jewels are not mine, and I cannot share what is another's, no matter with whom, nor in what proportions."

"They are not yours, are they not?" returned Raeburn. "And you could not share them with anybody, couldn't you? Well, now, that is what I call a pity; for here I am obliged to take you to the station. The police—think of that," he continued; "think of the disgrace for your respectable parents; think," he went on, taking Harry by the wrist; "think of the Colonies and the Day of Judgment."

"I cannot help it," wailed Harry. "It is not my fault. You will not come with me to Eaton Place."

"No," replied the man, "I will not, that is certain.

And I mean to divide these playthings with you here."

And so saying he applied a sudden and severe torsion to the lad's wrist.

Harry could not suppress a scream, and the perspiration burst forth upon his face. Perhaps pain and terror quickened his intelligence, but certainly at that moment the whole business flashed across him in another light; and he saw that there was nothing for it but to accede to the ruffian's proposal, and trust to find the house and force him to disgorge, under more favorable circumstances, and when he himself was clear from all suspicion.

"I agree," he said.

"There is a lamb," sneered the gardener. "I thought you would recognize your interests at last. This bandbox," he continued, "I shall burn with my rubbish; it is a thing that curious folk might recognize; and as for you, scrape up your gayeties and put them in your pocket."

Harry proceeded to obey, Raeburn watching him, and every now and again, his greed rekindled by some bright scintillation, abstracting another jewel from the secretary's share, and adding it to his own.

When this was finished, both proceeded to the front door, which Raeburn cautiously opened to observe the street. This was apparently clear of passengers; for he suddenly seized Harry by the nape of the neck, and holding his face downward so that he could see nothing but the roadway and the doorsteps of the houses,

pushed him violently before him down one street and up another for the space of perhaps a minute and a half. Harry had counted three corners before the bully relaxed his grasp, and crying, "Now be off with you!" sent the lad flying headforemost with a well-directed and athletic kick.

When Harry gathered himself up, half-stunned and bleeding freely at the nose, Mr. Raeburn had entirely disappeared. For the first time, anger and pain so completely overcame the lad's spirits that he burst into a fit of tears and remained sobbing in the middle of the road.

After he had thus somewhat assuaged his emotion, he began to look about him and read the names of the streets at whose intersection he had been deserted by the gardener. He was still in an unfrequented portion of West London, among villas and large gardens; but he could see some persons at a window who had evidently witnessed his misfortune; and almost immediately after a servant came running from the house and offered him a glass of water. At the same time, a dirty rogue, who had been slouching somewhere in the neighborhood, drew near him from the other side.

"Poor fellow," said the maid, "how vilely you have been handled, to be sure! Why, your knees are all cut, and your clothes ruined! Do you know the wretch who used you so?"

"That I do!" cried Harry, who was somewhat refreshed by the water; "and shall run him home in spite

of his precautions. He shall pay dearly for this day's work, I promise you."

"You had better come into the house and have yourself washed and brushed," continued the maid. "My mistress will make you welcome, never fear. And see, I will pick up your hat. Why, love of mercy!" she screamed, "if you have not dropped diamonds all over the street!"

Such was the case; a good half of what remained to him after the depredations of Mr. Raeburn had been shaken out of his pockets by the somersault, and once more lay glittering on the ground. He blessed his fortune that the maid had been so quick of eye; "there is nothing so bad but it might be worse," thought he; and the recovery of these few seemed to him almost as great an affair as the loss of all the rest. But, alas! as he stooped to pick up his treasures the loiterer made a rapid onslaught, overset both Harry and the maid with a movement of his arms, swept up a double handful of the diamonds, and made off along the street with an amazing swiftness.

Harry, as soon as he could get upon his feet, gave chase to the miscreant with many cries, but the latter was too fleet of foot, and probably too well acquainted with the locality; for turn where the pursuer would he could find no traces of the fugitive.

In the deepest despondency Harry revisited the scene of his mishap, where the maid, who was still waiting, very honestly returned to him his hat and

the remainder of the fallen diamonds. Harry thanked her from his heart, and being now in no humor for economy, made his way to the nearest cab stand, and set off for Eaton Place by coach.

The house, on his arrival, seemed in some confusion, as if a catastrophe had happened in the family; and the servants clustered together in the hall, and were unable, or perhaps not altogether anxious, to suppress their merriment at the tatterdemalion figure of the secretary. He passed them with as good an air of dignity as he could assume, and made directly for the boudoir. When he opened the door, an astonishing and even menacing spectacle presented itself to his eyes; for he beheld the general and his wife, and, of all people, Charlie Pendragon, closeted together, and speaking with earnestness and gravity on some important subject. Harry saw at once that there was little left for him to explain—plenary confession had plainly been made to the general of the intended fraud upon his pocket, and the unfortunate miscarriage of the scheme; and they had all made common cause against a common danger.

"Thank Heaven!" cried Lady Vandeleur, "here he is! The bandbox, Harry, the bandbox!"

But Harry stood before them silent and downcast.

"Speak!" she cried. "Speak! Where is the bandbox?"

And the men, with threatening gestures, repeated the demand.

Harry drew a handful of jewels from his pocket. He was very white.

"This is all that remains," said he. "I declare before Heaven it was through no fault of mine; and if you will have patience, although some are lost, I am afraid, forever, others, I am sure, may be still recovered!"

"Alas!" cried Lady Vandeleur, "all our diamonds are gone, and I owe ninety thousand pounds for dress!"

"Madam," said the general, "you might have paved the gutter with your own trash; you might have made debts to fifty times the sum you mention; you might have robbed me of my mother's coronet and rings; and Nature might have still so far prevailed that I could have forgiven you at last. But, madam, you have taken the Rajah's Diamond—the Eye of Light, as the Orientals poetically termed it—the Pride of Kashgar! You have taken from me the Rajah's Diamond," he cried, raising his hands, "and all, madam, all is at an end between us!"

"Believe me, General Vandeleur," she replied, "that is one of the most agreeable speeches that ever I heard from your lips; and since we are to be ruined I could almost welcome the change, if it delivers me from you. You have told me often enough that I married you for your money; let me tell you now that I always bitterly repented the bargain; and if you were still marriageable, and had a diamond bigger than your

head, I should counsel even my maid against a union so uninviting and disastrous. As for you, Mr. Hartley," she continued, turning on the secretary, "you have sufficiently exhibited your valuable qualities in this house; we are now persuaded that you equally lack manhood, sense and self-respect; and I can see only one course open for you—to withdraw instanter, and, if possible, return no more. For your wages you may rank as a creditor in my late husband's bankruptcy."

Harry had scarcely comprehended this insulting address before the general was down upon him with another.

"And in the meantime," said that personage, "follow me before the nearest inspector of police. You may impose upon a simple-minded soldier, sir, but the eye of the law will read your disreputable secret. If I must spend my old age in poverty through your underhand intriguing with my wife, I mean at least that you shall not remain unpunished for your pains; and God, sir, will deny me a very considerable satisfaction if you do not pick oakum from now until your dying day."

With that the general dragged Harry from the apartment and hurried him down-stairs and along the street to the police-station of the district.

Here (says my Arabian author) ended this deplorable business of the bandbox. But to the unfortunate secretary the whole affair was the beginning of

a new and manlier life. The police were easily persuaded of his innocence; and, after he had given what help he could in the subsequent investigation, he was even complimented by one of the chiefs of the detective department on the probity and simplicity of his behavior. Several persons interested themselves in one so unfortunate; and soon after he inherited a sum of money from a maiden aunt in Worcestershire. With this he married Prudence, and set sail for Bendigo, or, according to another account, for Trincomalee, exceedingly content, and with the best of prospects.

XIII.—The Hero and the Cowboy*

By Joseph C. Lincoln

Not every boy is permitted to spend a vacation down Cape Cod way in Massachusetts. The next best thing to that is reading "Joe" Lincoln's books about the folks who live there. Conspicuous among them is Captain Bailey Stitt. He had in his long life many unusual adventures, but if any of you boys should chance to meet him and ask what was the most remarkable of all, undoubtedly he would tell you of his cruise in the red motorcar—the "buzz wagon," as he called it.—THE EDITOR.

"OF course," said Captain Bailey Stitt musingly, "I didn't know the critter was weak in his top riggin' or I wouldn't have gone with him in the fust place. And he wan't real loony, nuther. 'Twas only when he got aboard that—that ungodly kerosene-smellin', tootin', buzzin', Old Harry's go-cart of his that the craziness begun to show. There's so many of them weak-minded city folks from the Ocean House comes perusin' 'round here summers, nowadays, that I cal'lated he was just an average specimen, and never examined him close."

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"Are all the Ocean House boarders weak-minded?" I inquired, seeking information.

Captain Bailey bounced on his overturned mackerel-keg like a fat, tan-colored rubber ball.

"My land!" he snapped. "Would they board at the Ocean House if they wan't weak-minded? This feller wan't an Ocean Houser, though. He was young Stumpton's automobile skipper-shover, or shofer, or somethin' they called him. He answered to the hail of Billings, and his home port was the Stumptons' ranch, way out in Montana. He'd been here in Orham only a couple of weeks, havin' come plumb across the United States to fetch his boss the new automobile. You see, 'twas early October. The Stumptons had left their summer place on the Cliff Road, and was on their way south for the winter. Young Stumpton was up to Boston, but he was comin' back in a couple of days, and then him and the shover was goin' automobilin' to Florida. To Florida, mind you! In that thing! If it was me I'd buy my ticket to Tophet direct and save time and money.

"Well, anyhow, this critter Billings he ain't never smelt salt water afore, and he don't like the smell. He makes proclamations that Orham is nothin' but sand, slush, and soft drinks. He won't sail, he can't swim, he won't fish: but he's hankerin' to shoot somethin', havin' been brought up in a place where if you don't shoot some of the neighbors every day or so folks think you're stuck up and dissociable. Then

somebody tells him it's the duckin' season down to Setuckit P'int, and he says he'll spend his day off, while the boss is away, massycreein' the coots there. This same somebody whispers that I know so much about ducks that I quack when I talk, and he comes cruisin' over in the buzz-cart to hire me for guide. And—would you b'lieve it?—it turns out that he's cal'latin' to make his duckin' v'yage in that very cart. I was for makin' the trip in a boat, like a sensible man, but he wouldn't hear of it.

"'Land of love!' says I. 'Go to Setuckit in a automobile?'

"'Why not?' he says. 'The biscuit-shooter up at the hotel tells me there's a smart chance of folks goes there a-horse-back. And where a hoss can travel I reckon the old gal here'—slappin' the thwart of the auto alongside of him—'can go too!'

"'But there's the Cut-through,' says I.

"'Tain't nothin' but a creek when the freshet's over, they tell me,' says he. 'And me and the boss have forded four foot of river in this very machine.'

"By the 'freshet' bein' over I judged he meant the tide bein' out. And the Cut-through ain't but a little trickle then, though it's a quarter-mile wide and deep enough to float a schooner at high-water. It's the strip of channel that makes Setuckit Beach an island, you know. The gov'ment has had engineers down dredgin' of it out, and pretty soon fish-boats 'll be able

to save the twenty-mile sail around the P'int and into Orham Harbor at all hours.

"Well, to make a long story short, I agreed to let him cart me to Setuckit P'int in that everlastin' gas-carryall. We was to start at four o'clock in the afternoon, 'cause the tide at the Cut-through would be dead low at half-past four. We'd stay overnight at my shanty at the P'int, get up airly, shoot all day, and come back the next afternoon.

"At four prompt he was on hand, ready for me. I loaded in the guns and grub and one thing or 'nother, and then 'twas time for me to get aboard myself.

" 'You'll set in the tonneau,' says he, indicatin' the upholstered after-cockpit of the concern. I opened up the shiny hatch, under orders from him, and climbed in amongst the upholstery. 'Twas soft as a feather-bed.

" 'Jerushy!' says I, lollin' back luxurious. 'This is fine, ain't it?'

" 'Cost seventy-five hundred to build,' he says, casual. 'Made to order for the boss. Lightest car of her speed ever turned out.'

" 'Go 'way! How you talk! Seventy-five hundred what? Not dollars?'

" 'Sure,' he says. Then he turns round—he was in the bow, hangin' on to the steerin'-wheel—and looks me over, kind of interested, but superior. 'Say,' he says, 'I've been hearin' things about you. You're a hero, ain't you?'

"Durn them Orham gabblers! Ever sence I hauled that crew of seasick summer boarders out of the drink a couple of years ago and the gov'ment gave me a medal, the minister and some more of his gang have painted out the name I was launched under and had me entered on the shippin'-list as 'The Hero.' I've licked two or three for callin' me that, but I can't lick a parson, and he was the one that told Billings.

" 'Oh, I don't know!' I answers, pretty sharp. 'Get her under way, why don't you?'

"All he done was look me over some more and grin.

" 'A hero! A real, live gov'ment-branded hero!' he says. 'Ain't scared of nothin', I reckon—hey?'

"I never made no answer. There's some things that's too fresh to eat without salt, and I didn't have a pickle-tub handy.

" 'Hum!' he says again, reverend-like. 'A sure hero; scared of nothin'! Never rode in an auto afore, did you?'

" 'No,' says I, peppery; 'and I don't see no present symptoms of ridin' in one now. Cast off, won't you?'

"He cast off. That is to say, he hauled a nickel-plated marlinspike thing towards him, shoved another one away from him, took a twist on the steerin'-wheel, the go-cart coughed like a horse with the heaves, started up some sort of buzz-planer underneath, and then we begun to move.

"From the time we left my shanty at South Orham till we passed the pines at Herrin' Neck I laid back

in that stuffed cockpit, feelin' as grand and tainted as old John D. himself. The automobile rolled along smooth but swift, and it seemed to me I had never known what easy trav'lin' was afore. As we rounded the bend by the pines and opened up the twelve-mile narrow white stretch of Setuckit Beach ahead of us, with the ocean on one side and the bay on t'other, I looked at my watch. We'd come that fur in thirteen minutes.

"'Land sakes!' I says. 'This is what *I* call movin' right along!'

"He turned round and sized me up again, like he was surprised.

"'Movin'?' says he. 'Movin'? Why, pard, we've been settin' down to rest! Out our way if a lynchin' party didn't move faster than we've done so fur, the center of attraction would die on the road of old age. Now, my heroic college chum,' he goes on, callin' me out of my name as usual, 'will you be so condescendin' as to indicate how we hit the trail?'

"Hit—hit which? Don't hit nothin', for goodness' sake! Goin' the way we be, it would——'

"'Which way do we go?'

"'Right straight ahead. Keep on the ocean side, 'cause there's more hard sand there, and—hold on! Don't do that! Stop it, I tell you!'

"Them was the last rememberable words said by me durin' the next quarter of an hour. That shover man let out a hair-raisin' yell, hauled the nickel mar-

linespike over in its rack, and squeezed a rubber bag that was spliced to the steerin'-wheel. There was a half dozen toots or howls or honks from under our bows somewheres, and then that automobile hopped off the ground and commenced to fly. The fust hop landed me on my knees in the cockpit, and there I stayed. 'Twas the most fittin' position fur my frame of mind and chimed in fust-rate with the general religious drift of my thoughts.

"The Cut-through is two mile or more from Herrin' Neck. 'Cording to my count we hit terra cotta just three times in them two miles. The fust hit knocked my hat off. The second one chucked me up so high I looked back for the hat, and though we was a half mile away from it, it hadn't had time to git to the ground. And all the while the horn was a honkin', and Billings was a screechin', and the sand was a flyin'. Sand! Why, say! Do you see that extra bald place on the back of my head? Yes? Well, there was a two-inch thatch of hair there afore that sand-blast ground it off.

"When I went up on the third jounce I noticed the Cut-through just ahead. Billings see it, too, and —would you b'lieve it?—the lunatic stood up, let go of the wheel with one hand, takes off his hat and waves it, and we charge down across them wet tide flats like death on the woolly horse, in Scriptur'.

"'Hi, yah! Yip!' whoops Billings. 'Come on in, fellers! The water's fine! Yow! Y-e-e-e! Yip!'

"For a second it left off rainin' sand, and there was a typhoon of mud and spray. I see a million of the prettiest rainbows—that is, I cal'lated there was a million; it's awful hard to count when you're bouncin' and prayin' and drowndin' all to once. Then we sizzed out of the channel, over the flats on t'other side, and on towards Setuckit.

"Never mind the rest of the ride. 'Twas all a sort of constant changin' sameness. I remember passin' a blurred life-savin' station, with three—or maybe thirty—blurred men jumpin' and laughin' and hollerin'. I found out afterwards that they'd been on the look-out for the bombshell for half an hour. Billings had told around town what he was goin' to do to me, and some kind friend had telephoned it to the station. So the life-savers was full of anticipations. I hope they were satisfied. I hadn't rehearsed my part of the show none, but I feel what the parson calls a consciousness of havin' done my best.

"'Woa, gal!' says Billings, calm and easy, puttin' the helm hard down. The auto was standin' still at last. Part of me was hangin' over the lee rail. I could see out of the part, so I know 'twas my head. And there alongside was my fish-shanty at the P'int, goin' round and round in circles.

"I undid the hatch of the cockpit and fell out on the sand. Then I scrambled up and caught hold of the shanty as it went past me. That fool shover watched me, seemin'ly interested.

"FOR A SECOND IT LEFT OFF RAININ' SAND, AND THERE WAS A TYPHOON OF MUD AND SPRAY"

"'Why, pard,' says he, 'what's the matter? Do you feel pale? Are you nervous? It ain't possible that you're scared? Honest, now, pard, if it weren't that I knew you were a genuine gold-mounted hero I'd sure think you was a scared man.'

"I never said nothin'. The scenery and me was just turnin' the mark buoy on our fourth lap.

"'Dear me, pard!' continues Billings. 'I sure hope I ain't scared you none. We come down a little slow this evenin', but to-morrow night, when I take you back home, I'll let the old girl out a little.'

"I sensed some of that. And as the shanty had about come to anchor, I answered and spoke my mind.

"'When you take me back home!' I says. 'When you do! Why, you crack-brained, murderin' lunatic, I wouldn't cruise in that buzz-wagon of yours again for the skipper's wages on a Cunarder! No, nor the mate's hove in!'

"And that shover he put his head back and laughed and laughed and laughed.

II

"I tell you I had to take it that evenin'. All the time I was cookin' and while he was eatin' supper, Billings was rubbin' it into me about my bein' scared. Called me all the salt-water-hero names he could think of—'Hobson' and 'Dewey' and the like of that, usin' 'em sourcastic, of course. Finally, he said he remembered readin' in school, when he was little, about a

girl hero, name of Grace Darlin'. Said he cal'lated, if I didn't mind, he'd call me Grace, 'cause it was heroic and yet kind of fitted in with my partic'lar brand of bravery. I didn't answer much; he had me down, and I knew it. Likewise I judged he was more or less out of his head; no sane man would yell the way he done aboard that automobile.

"Then he commenced to spin yarns about himself and his doin's, and pretty soon it come out that he'd been a cowboy afore young Stumpton give up ranchin' and took to automobilin'. That cleared the sky-line some of course; I'd read consider'ble about cowboys in the ten-cent books my nephew fetched home when he was away to school. I see right off that Billings was the livin' image of *Deadwood Dick* and *Wild Bill* and the rest in them books; they yelled and howled and hadn't no regard for life and property any more'n he had. No, sir! He wan't no crazier'n they was; it was in the breed, I judged.

" 'I sure wish I had you on the ranch, Grace,' says he. 'Why don't you come West some day? That's where a hero like you would show up strong.'

" 'Godfrey mighty!' I sings out. 'I wouldn't come nigh such a nest of crazy murderers as that fur no money! I'd sooner ride in that automobile of yours, and St. Peter himself couldn't coax me into *that* again, not if 'twas fur a cruise plumb up the middle of the golden street!'

"I meant it, too, and the next afternoon when it

come time to start for home he found out that I meant it. We'd shot a lot of ducks, and Billings was havin' such a good time that I had to coax and tease him as if he was a young one afore he'd think of quittin'. It was quarter of six when he backed the gas-cart out of the shed. I was uneasy, 'cause 'twas past low-water time, and there was fog comin' on.

" 'Brace up, Dewey!' says he. 'Get in.'

" 'No, Mr. Billings,' says I. 'I ain't goin' to get in. You take that craft of yourn home, and I'll sail up alongside in my dory.'

" 'In your which?' says he.

" 'In my dory,' I says. 'That's her, hauled up on the beach abreast the shanty.'

"He looked at the dory and then at me.

" 'Go on!' says he. 'You ain't goin' to pack yourself twelve mile on *that shingle?*'

" 'Sartin I am!' says I. 'I ain't takin' no more chances.'

"Do you know, he actually seemed to think *I* was crazy then. Seemed to figger that the dory wan't big enough; and she's carried five easy afore now. We had an argument that lasted twenty minutes more, and the fog driftin' in nigher all the time. At last he got sick of arguin', ripped out something brisk and personal, and got his tin-shop to movin'.

" 'You want to cross over to the ocean side,' I called after him. 'The Cut-through's been dredged at the bay end, remember.'

"'Be hanged!' he yells, or more emphatic. And off he whizzed. I see him go and fetched a long breath. Thanks to a merciful Providence, I'd come so fur without bein' buttered on the undercrust of that automobile or scalped with its crazy shover's bowie-knife.

"Ten minutes later I was beatin' out into the bay in my dory. All around was the fog, thin as poorhouse gruel so fur, but thickenin' every minute. I was worried; not for myself, you understand, but for that cowboy shover. I was afraid he wouldn't fetch t'other side of the Cut-through. There wan't much wind, and I had to make long tacks. I took the inshore channel, and kept listenin' all the time. And at last, when 'twas pretty dark and I was cal'latin' to be about abreast of the bay end of the Cut-through, I heard from somewheres ashore a dismal honkin' kind of noise, same as a wild goose might make if 'twas chokin' to death and not resigned to the worst.

"'My land!' says I. 'It's happened!' And I come about and headed straight in for the beach. I struck it just alongside the gov'ment shanty. The engineers had knocked off work for the week, waitin' for supplies, but they hadn't took away their dunnage.

"'Hi!' I yells, as I hauled up the dory. 'Hi-i-i! Billings, where be you?'

"The honkin' stopped and back comes the answer; there was joy in it.

"'What? Is that Captain Stitt?'

"'Yes,' I sings out. 'Where be you?'

"'I'm stuck out here in the middle of the crick. And there's a flood on. Help me, can't you?'

"Next minute I was aboard the dory, rowin' her against the tide up the channel. Pretty quick I got where I could see him through the fog and dark. The auto was on the flat in the middle of the Cut-through and the water was hub high already. Billings was standin' up on the for'ard thwart, makin' wet foot-marks all over them expensive cushions.

"'Lord,' says he, 'I sure am glad to see you, pard! Can we get to land, do you think?'

"'Land?' says I, makin' the dory fast alongside and hoppin' out into the drink. 'Course we can land! What's the matter with your old derelict? Sprung a leak, has it?'

"He went on to explain that the automobile had broke down when he struck the flat, and he couldn't get no further. He'd been honkin' and howlin' for ten year at least, so he reckoned.

"'Why in time,' says I, 'didn't you mind me and go up the ocean side? And why in nation didn't you go ashore and— But never mind that now. Let me think. Here! You set where you be.'

"As I shoved off in the dory again he turned loose a distress signal.

"'Where you goin'?' he yells. 'Say, pard, you ain't goin' to leave me here, are you?'

"'I'll be back in a shake,' says I, layin' to my oars. 'Don't holler so! You'll have the life-savers down

here, and then the joke'll be on us. Hush, can't you? I'll be right back!'

III

"I rowed up channel a little ways, and then I sighted the place I was bound for. Them gov'ment folks had another shanty further up the Cut-through. Moored out in front of it was a couple of big floats, for their stone-sloops to tie up to at high-water. The floats were made of empty kerosene-barrels and planks, and they'd have held up a house easy. I run alongside the fust one, cut the anchor-cable with my jack-knife, and next minute I was navigatin' that float down channel, steerin' it with my oar and towin' the dory astern.

" 'Twas no slouch of a job, pilotin' that big float, but part by steerin' and part by polin' I managed to land her broadside on to the auto. I made her fast with the cable ends and went back after the other float. This one was a bigger job than the fust, but by and by that gas-wagon, with planks under her and cable lashin's holdin' her firm, was restin' easy as a settin' hen between them two floats. I unshipped my mast, fetched it aboard the nighest float, and spread the sail over the biggest part of the brasswork and upholstery.

" 'There,' says I, 'if it rains durin' the night she'll keep pretty dry. Now I'll take the dory and row back to the shanty after some spare anchors there is there.'

"'But what's it fur, pard?' asks Billings for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time. 'Why don't we go where it's dry? The flood's risin' all the time.'

"'Let it rise,' I says. 'I cal'late when it gets high enough them floats'll rise with it and lift the automobile up too. If she's anchored bow and stern she'll hold, unless it comes on to blow a gale, and to-morrow mornin' at low tide maybe you can tinker her up so she'll go.'

"'Go?' says he, like he was astonished. 'Do you mean to say you're reckonin' to save the *car?*'

"'Good land!' I says, starin' at him. 'What else d'you s'pose? Think I'd let seventy-five hundred dollars' wuth of gilt-edged extravagance go to the bottom? What did you cal'late I was tryin' to save—the clam-flat? Give me that dory-rope; I'm goin' after them anchors. Sufferin' snakes! Where *is* the dory? What have you done with it?'

"He'd been holdin' the bight of the dory-rodin'. I handed it to him so's he'd have somethin' to take up his mind. And, by time, he'd forgot all about it and let it drop! And the dory had gone adrift and was out of sight.

"'Gosh!' says he, astonished-like. 'Pard, the son of a gun has slipped his halter!'

"I was pretty mad—dories don't grow on every beach-plum bush—but there wan't nothin' to say that fitted the case, so I didn't try.

"'Humph!' says I. 'Well, I'll have to swim ashore.

that's all, and go up to the station inlet after another boat. You stand by the ship. If she gets afloat afore I come back you honk and holler and I'll row after you. I'll fetch the anchors and we'll moor her wherever she happens to be. If she shouldn't float on an even keel, or goes to capsize, you jump overboard and swim ashore. I'll——'

" 'Swim?' says he, with a shake in his voice. 'Why, pard, I can't swim!'

"I turned and looked at him. Shover of a two-mile-a-minute gold-plated butcher-cart like that, a cowboy murderer that et his friends for breakfast—and couldn't swim! I fetched a kind of combination groan and sigh, turned back the sail, climbed aboard the automobile, and lit up my pipe.

" 'What are you settin' there for?' says he. 'What are you goin' to do?'

" 'Do?' says I. 'Wait, that's all—wait and smoke. We won't have to wait long.'

"My prophesyin' was good. We didn't have to wait very long. It was pitch dark, foggy as ever, and the tide a risin' fast. The floats got to be awash. I shinned out on to 'em picked up the oar that had been left there, and took my seat again. Billings climbed in too, only—and it kind of shows the change sence the previous evenin'—he was in the passenger-cockpit astern and I was for'ard in the pilot house. For a reckless dare-devil he was actin' mighty fidgety.

"And at last one of the floats swung off the sand.

The automobile tipped scandalous. It looked as if we was goin' on our beam-ends. Billings let out an awful yell. Then t'other float bobbed up and the whole shebang, car and all, drifted out and down the channel.

"My lashin's held—I cal'lated they would. Soon's I was sure of that I grabbed up the oar and shoved it over the stern between the floats. I hoped I could round her to after we passed the mouth of the Cut-through, and make port on the inside beach. But not in that tide. Inside of five minutes I see 'twas no use; we was bound across the bay.

"And now commenced a v'yage that beat any ever took sence Noah's time, I cal'late; and even Noah never went to sea in an automobile, though the one animal I had along was as much trouble as his whole menagerie. Billings was howlin' blue murder.

"'Stop that bellerin'!' I ordered. 'Quit it, d'you hear! You'll have the station crew out after us, and they'll guy me till I can't rest. Shut up! If you don't, I'll—I'll swim ashore and leave you.'

"I was takin' big chances, as I look at it now. He might have drawed a bowie-knife or a lasso on me; 'cordin' to his yarns he'd butchered folks for a good sight less'n that. But he kept quiet this time, only gurglin' some when the ark tilted. I had time to think of another idee. You remember the dory-sail, mast and all, was alongside that cart. I clewed up the canvas well as I could and managed to lash the

mast up straight over the auto's bows. Then I shook out the sail.

"'Here!' says I, turnin' to Billings. 'You hang on to that sheet. No, you needn't nuther. Make it fast to that cleat alongside.'

"I couldn't see his face plain, but his voice had a funny tremble to it; reminded me of my own when I climbed out of that very cart after he'd jounced me down to Setuckit, the day before.

"'What?' he says. 'Wh-what? What sheet? I don't see any sheet. What do you want me to do?'

"'Tie this line to that cleat. That cleat there! *Cleat*, you lubber! *Cleat!* That knob! *Make it fast!* Oh, my gosh t'mighty! Get out of my way!'

"The critter had tied the sheet to the handle of the door instead of the one I meant, and the pull of the sail hauled the door open and pretty nigh ripped it off the hinges. I had to climb into the cockpit and straighten out the mess. I was losin' my temper; I do hate bunglin' seamanship aboard a craft of mine.

"'But what'll become of us?' begs Billings. 'Will we drown?'

"What in tunket do we want to drown for? Ain't we got a good sailin' breeze and the whole bay to stay on top of—fifty foot of water and more?'

"'Fifty foot!' he yells. 'Is there fifty foot of water underneath us now? Pard, you don't mean it!'

"'Course I mean it. Good thing, too!'

"'But fifty foot! It's enough to drown in ten times over!'

"'Can't drown but once, can you? And I'd just as soon drown in fifty foot as four—ruther, 'cause 'twouldn't take so long.'

"He didn't answer out loud; but I heard him talkin' to himself pretty constant.

IV

"We was well out in the bay by now, and the seas was a little mite more rugged—nothin' to hurt, you understand, but the floats was all foam, and once in a while we'd ship a little spray. And every time that happened Billings would jump and grab for somethin' solid—sometimes 'twas the upholstery and sometimes 'twas me. He wan't on the thwart, but down in a heap on the cockpit floor.

"'Let go of my leg!' I sings out, after we'd hit a high wave and that shover had made a more'n ordinary savage claw at my underpinnin'. 'You make me nervous. Drat this everlastin' fog! Somethin' 'll bump into us if we don't look out. Here, you go for'ard and light them cruisin'-lights. They ain't colored 'cordin' to regulations, but they'll have to do. Go for'ard! What you waitin' for?'

"Well, it turned out that he didn't like to leave that cockpit. I was mad.

"'Go for'ard there and light them lights!' I yelled,

hangin' to the steerin' oar and keepin' the ark runnin' afore the wind.

"'I won't!' he says, loud and emphatic. 'Think I'm a blame fool? I sure would be a jack-rabbit to climb over them seats the way they're buckin' and light them lamps. You're talkin' through your hat!'

"Well, I hadn't no business to do it, but, you see, I was on salt water, and skipper, as you might say, of the junk we was afloat in; and if there's one thing I never would stand it's mutiny. I hauled in the oar, jumped over the cockpit-rail, and went for him. He see me comin', stood up, tried to get out of the way, and fell overboard backwards. Part of him lit on one of the floats, but the biggest part trailed in the water between the two. He clawed with his hands, but the planks was slippery, and he slid astern fast. Just as he reached the last plank and slid off and under I jumped after him and got him by the scruff of the neck. I had hold of the lashin'-end with one hand and we tailed out behind the ark, which was sloppin' along, graceful as an elephant on skates.

"I was pretty well beat out when I yanked him into that cockpit again. Neither of us said anything for a spell, breath bein' scurce as di'monds. But when he'd collected some of his, he spoke.

"'Pard,' he says, puffin', 'I'm much obleeged to you. I reckon I sure ain't treated you right. If it hadn't been for you that time I'd——'

"But I was bilin' over. I whirled on him like a teetotum.

"'Drat your hide!' I says. 'When you speak to your officer you say sir! And now you go for'ard and light them lights. Don't you answer back! If you do I'll fix you so's you'll never ship aboard another vessel! For'ard there! Lively, you lubber, lively!'

"He went for'ard, takin' consider'ble time and hangin' on for dear life. But somehow or 'nuther he got the lights to goin'; and all the time I hazed him terrible. I was mate on an Australian packet afore I went fishin' to the Banks, and I can haze some. I blackguarded that shover awful.

"'Ripperty-rip your everlastin' blankerty-blanked dough-head!' I roared at him. 'You ain't wuth the weight to sink you. For'ard there and get that fog-horn to goin'! And keep it goin'! Lively, you sculpin! Don't you open your mouth to me!'

"Well, all night we sloshed along, straight acrost the bay. We must have been a curious sight to look at. The floats was awash, so that the automobile looked like she was ridin' the waves all by her lonesome; the lamps was blazin' at either side of the bow; Billings was a tootin' the rubber fog-horn as if he was wound up; and I was standin' on the cushions amidships, keepin' the whole calabash afore the wind.

"We never met another craft the whole night through. Yes, we did meet one. Old Ezra Cahoon,

of Harnis, was out in his dory stealin' quahaugs from Seth Andrews's bed over nigh the Wapatomac shore. Ezra stayed long enough to get one good glimpse of us as we bust through the fog; then he cut his rodin' and laid to his oars, bound for home and mother. We could hear him screech for half an hour after he left us.

"Ez told next day that the devil had come ridin' acrost the bay after him in a chariot of fire. Said he could smell the brimstone and hear the trumpet callin' him to judgment. Likewise he hove in a lot of particulars concernin' the personal appearance of the Old Boy himself, who, he said, was standin' up wavin' a redhot pitchfork. Some folks might have been flattered at bein' took for such a famous character; but I wan't; I'm retirin' by nature, and, besides, Ez's description wan't cal'lated to bust a body's vanity-biler. I was prouder of the consequences, the same bein' that Ezra signed the Good Templars' pledge that afternoon, and kept it for three whole months, just sixty-nine days longer than any previous attack within the memory of man had lasted.

"And finally, just as mornin' was breakin,' the bows of the floats slid easy and slick up on a hard, sandy beach. Then the sun riz and the fog lifted, and there we was within sight of the South Ostable meetin'-house. We'd sailed eighteen miles in that ark and made a better landin' blindfold than we ever could have made on purpose.

"I hauled down the sail, unshipped the mast, and jumped ashore to find a rock big enough to use for a makeshift anchor. It wan't more'n three minutes after we fust struck afore my boots hit dry ground, but Billings beat me one hundred and seventy seconds, at that. When I had time to look at that shover man he was a cable's-length from high-tide mark, settin' down and grippin' a bunch of beach-grass as if he was afeard the sand was goin' to slide from under him; and you never seen a yallerer, more upset critter in your born days.

"Well, I got the ark anchored, after a fashion, and then we walked up to the South Ostable tavern. Sim Small, who runs the place, he knows me, so he let me have a room and I turned in for a nap. I slept about three hours. When I woke up I started out to hunt the automobile and Billings. Both of 'em looked consider'ble better than they had when I see 'em last. The shover had got a gang of men and they'd got the gas-cart ashore, and Billings and a blacksmith was workin' over—or rather under—the clockwork.

" 'Hello!' I hails, comin' alongside.

"Billings sticks his head out from under the tinware.

" 'Hi, pard!' says he. I noticed he hadn't called me 'Grace' nor 'Dewey' for a long spell. 'Hi, pard,' he says, gettin' to his feet, 'the old gal ain't hurt a hair. She'll be good as ever in a couple of hours. Then you and me can start for Orham.'

"'In her?' says I.

"'Sure,' he says.

"'Not by a jugful!' says I, emphatic. 'I'll borrer a boat to get to Orham in, when I'm ready to go. You won't ketch me in that man-killer again; and you can call me a coward all you want to!'

"'A coward?' says he. 'You a coward? And—Why, you was in that car all night!'

"'Oh!' I says. 'Last night was diff'rent. The thing was on the water then, and when I've got enough water underneath me I know I'm safe.'

"'Safe!' he sings out. '*Safe!* Well, by—gosh! Pard, I hate to say it, but it's the Lord's truth—you had me doin' my "Now I lay me's!" '

"For a minute we looked at each other. Then says I, sort of thinkin' out loud, 'I cal'late,' I says, 'that whether a man's brave or not depends consider'ble on whether he's used to his latitude. It's all accordin'. It lays in the bringin' up, as the duck said when the hen tried to swim.'

"He nodded solemn. 'Pard,' says he, 'I sure reckon you've called the turn. Let's shake hands on it.' "

XIV.—The Dollar*

By Morgan Robertson

HIS name was Angus Macpherson—pronounced MacPh*ai*rson—but he was so intensely Scotch that in every ship he had sailed in men called him Scotty. He had a face like a harvest-moon, with a sorrowful expression of the eyes, a frame like a gladiator's, a brogue modified from its original consistency to an understandable dialect, and the soul of a Scotchman—which means that he was possessed by two dominant and conflicting passions, love of God and love of Mammon. Add to these attributes a masterful knowledge of seamanship and an acquaintance with navigation, and you have a rough sketch of him as he stood at the wheel of a tow-barge just out of New York.

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Her name was the *Anita,* and she was the second barge in a tow of two. Ahead of her, at the end of a ninety-fathom steel tow-line, was the sister barge *Champion,* and at an equal distance farther ahead was the steamer *Proserpine.* Each barge carried stump spars and mutton-leg canvas—which was why Scotty, weary of the endless work in the deep-water wind-jammers, had gone "tow-barging"—and the three craft belonged to one owner.

The skipper, a young man with a humorous face and democratic manner, as became a lowly barge skipper, appeared before the Scotsman, jingling in his hand a number of bright silver dollars. Scotty eyed them hungrily.

"Fine, aren't they, Scotty?" he said. "How many of these plunkers does the devil need to buy your soul?"

"More than you can count, Cappen Bolt," answered Scotty, gravely. "My soul no belongs to me, but to my Maker."

"Nonsense," laughed the captain. "A Scot loves the siller first, his Maker next. Why, a Jew can't make a living in your country, Scotty."

"Possibly not, cappen; but it's no because Scotchmen are dishonest. The Lord has given us wits—that's all."

"Dead broke, Scotty?" asked Captain Bolt, idly.

"I banked the most o' my pay, sir. Ay, I'm what you might call broke."

"Too bad! Ought to have held some out. There'll be no money at Philadelphia. Owner's kickin'. Wants to save the interest, and he won't pay off till we get back."

Scotty's face assumed a rueful expression, and Captain Bolt watched it from the tail of his eye; then, before Scotty could speak, the prolonged clatter of the steward's dinner-bell began, and the captain moved towards the companion, pocketing the coins as he went. One fell on the deck, the noise of the bell preventing its fall being heard, and the captain did not see it. But Scotty did, and he watched it roll back towards the taffrail, assume a spiral motion, and lie down just aft of the quarter-bitt. The captain was now down in the cabin, but Scotty picked up the coin to hold for him until he came up. He should have let it lie.

For it was bright and beautiful to look at, hard and slippery to the touch as he held it in his trousers pocket, a pleasing contrast to the coming emptiness of that pocket in Philadelphia. Scotty's soul went through the usual conflict in such cases, and when Captain Bolt came up, rubbing his mouth, love of Mammon had won over love of God, and he said nothing about it. Shortly after, he was relieved, and he went forward. On the way a revulsion set in, and he turned back, resolved to hand it over, as though he had forgotten; but the captain had stepped below again, and with the memory of his boasted honesty

and the certainty of the captain's skepticism and ridicule in his mind, he turned again and went to the forecastle. When he had eaten his dinner, and slept four hours, he found on waking that his inclination to return it was stronger than at noon; but the certainty of being disbelieved had gained equally in strength, and the dollar remained in his pocket—a source of guilty joy and expectant misgiving. He longed for the day when it would be spent and off his mind, and calculated the days and hours before the tow would reach Philadelphia.

But Scotty did not reach Philadelphia; he fell overboard just within the Delaware capes and though he bawled lustily as the black side of the barge slipped by him in the darkness, and was answered in kind by his watchmates above, the noise did not reach the relentless power eleven hundred feet away, and he was left behind. But one had thrown him a lifebuoy, and on this he floated until daylight, when an outbound tug picked him up. The tug was bound to Boston.

"I'll e'en make the best o' it," said Scotty, as he wrung out his wet clothing in the tug's small forecastle. "And I'll regard the dollar as a special deespensation of an all-wise Providence; for what would I do in Boston wi'oot a bit o' money in my clothes?"

But he did not reach Boston. The tug had a full crew, scant accommodations, and a hard-hearted captain, who decreed that Scotty should be put aboard

the first craft that would take him. This happened to be a three-skysail-yard American ship—the *Baltimore*—two days out from New York for Shanghai, whose skipper backed his yard in answer to the tug-captain's offer to give him a sailor, and whose third-mate received Scotty—not with open arms, but clinched fists, as he dropped, swearing, to the deck in a bosun's chair.

"You ought to be glad you're alive," said her skipper, harshly, when Scotty had, later, come aft to protest against his abduction. "He pulled you out of a life-buoy, where you'd ha' drowned 'fore the next craft came along, and puts you aboard a big, safe ship where you couldn't fall overboard if you tried. Get forward, now, and stop this talk."

"And am I to be put on the articles?" demanded Scotty. "I expect to wark where'er I be; but do I get pay, I'm askin'?"

"No. My articles are full. You'll *wark* your passage."

"Four months' sleevery in a hell-ship," growled Scotty, as he went forward. "This comes o' backsleedin'. Lord forgi' me for it, but the punishment is hard. Howe'er, I'll just hang on to the dollar. I'll ha' earned it long this side o' the cape."

He did, and continued to earn it until the ship had neared the Yangtse-Kiang. Marked for the officers' attentions by his initial profane and irreverent comment on his transferral by the tug-captain, he was as-

saulted on the slightest provocation by the mates—no bigger than he or more skillful of fist, but justified by the law—and, though easily the best sailorman of the mixed crew, was put at distasteful tasks while inferior men worked at sailorly work on ropes and rigging.

There was nothing of this in the watch below, for Scotty could thrash the best two men forward, and led them all in forecastle discourse; but as it was a mixed crew, none too honest, in his opinion, he made a monk-bag—a leather pocket—for his dollar, and hung it around his neck; and, to further protect the precious coin, forswore his religion, called himself a Catholic and the monk-bag a phylactery, with a saint's relic within. This brought him to the notice of a gentle-souled Portuguese of the crew, a true believer, who made friends with the Scot and earned his confidence before he learned of the shamness of the phylactery. Scotty, on lookout one night, told him this in a burst of confidence that also included a confession of his peculation. His friend, horrified, not at the theft, but at the sacrilegious fraud, informed him that the coin was accursed, that his soul was accursed, and that the only salvation for him in this life and the next was, first, that he return the stolen dollar by hand to its rightful owner, next that he become a real believer in the only true church instead of an impostor.

"If you do not," he said, "you have alla time badda luck till you die, then purgatory and the flame."

Perhaps the flames of Sheol could not have turned Scotty from his faith; but he was certainly impressed with the first clause of the obligation.

"Ye maun be right, Manuel," he said; "for, though I thought it a deespensation, I find that all my hard luck came after it. I'll gie it back when I may."

"Who's on lookout here?" demanded the burly third mate as he climbed the forecastle steps. "Hey, who's on lookout?"

"I am, sir," answered Scotty, as Manuel drew out of the way.

"Get down on the main-deck, you dago son of a thief," bellowed the officer, aiming a kick at the retreating Portuguese. "D' ye see that light?" he said to Scotty. "With a man to help you keep lookout, d' ye see it?"

Scotty, derelict in his duty, did not see it for some moments—in fact, not until the third mate was through with him. Then he looked through closing eyes to where the third mate pointed—dead ahead, where a white light shone faintly in the darkness.

"Ay, ay, sir," he said, thickly. "I see it; and I'll e'en remember this night when I meet ye on shore, Mr. Smart. I'm no shipped in the craft, and it's a matter for the underwriters to know—puttin' me on lookout. As it is, I doot I'd meet trouble should I

pull yer head off the noo. I'm no a shipped man, d' ye hear?"

The last was like the roar of an angry bull, and the officer backed away from the enraged Scotchman. Then he descended the steps, and in a minute a man came up and relieved him.

The light did not move, and, the wind being gentle, the day broke before the ship had come up to it. Then they saw a black tramp steamer, rolling easily in the trough, with a string of small flags flying from aloft and the English ensign from the flag-staff at the taffrail. There was an exchange of signals between the two crafts until eight bells struck, and then Scotty, just about to sit down to his breakfast, was called aft and told to get his belongings ready for another transshipment. Scotty's belongings, the few rags he had collected by various methods from his shipmates, were hardly worth taking; but he regretted his breakfast, though glad to quit the ship. As he slid down the davit-tackle he surmised the meaning of the change by the expression on the third mate's face as he peered over the rail, and some words uttered by the captain, among which he only made out one—"underwriters."

"I'm told," said the semi-uniformed captain of the tramp, "that you are a castaway, picked up on the American coast, and are discontented with the ship."

"I dinna ken what the sleeve-drivers telt ye, cappen," answered Scotty, his brogue a little thicker from his emotions, "but I agree that I'm discontented."

"What's wrong with your face?"

"Ran foul o' the third mate's fist for no seein' your light. I were no one o' the crew, yet they put me on lookout. And I strongly suspect, cappen, that I'm bundled off mair on account o' that than because of my discontent."

"Possibly; but I'm a man short, and will sign you at Shanghai wages—three pounds a month. You will not be struck here, and will be well treated while you do your work. We're bound for Boston, and will go on when the engine is mended."

"I'm obleeged to ye, sir," said Scotty, radiantly. "And Boston's the port for me, sir. I've strong reasons for strikin' that coast."

He still had his dollar secure in its leather casing, hung to his neck, but in this ship he said nothing about it.

Nothing unpleasant happened to him on this passage homeward; and he fondly believed that his sincere intent to return the dollar to Captain Bolt had changed his luck—that his painful friction with Mr. Smart's fist was a providential happening; but Providence had ordered otherwise, and in this manner: The steamer captain, ahead of his reckoning while approaching the coast in thick fog, ran his ship at full speed onto the sands of Cape Cod. He was unable to back off; a rising wind and sea threw the steamer broadside to the beach, and here she churned a hole

for herself from which a wrecking tug could hardly pull her.

But a wrecking tug was sent for, by signals to the shore when the fog lifted, and in time one arrived, with a lifeboat in tow—which was a lucky forethought of some one, for the rising wind and sea had developed into a storm that was breaking the ship in pieces. Anchored well out, and steaming with full power into the teeth of the gale, the tug slacked down the lifeboat, and one by one the crew sprang into the sea and was pulled in. Six trips in and out completed the rescue, and Scotty came out on the last, with the frantic captain, who never ceased his bitter self-reproach.

But Scotty, irresponsible, had troubles of his own; he was wet and cold—for it was midwinter—and once aboard the wrecking tug, he fled the captain's inward objurgations, and sought the warmth of the firehold. Here he burrowed far along beside the boilers, and being utterly exhausted as well as chilled and drenched, and far from the captain's voice, fell into a sleep which lasted until the tug had tied up at Boston; then he came out, to find his shipmates gone ashore.

"Are you the missing man o' that crew?" asked the mate of the tug. "Your skipper says to stay here, and he'll bring you your pay."

"That's gude," answered Scotty, cheerfully. "But I'll just stretch my legs on the dock a wee bit, for it's a long time since I've been ashore."

The tug was moored outside of a small schooner,

whose crew, as he crossed her deck, were "loosing" sails, singling lines and making other obvious preparations to getting away. As he mounted her rail to climb to the dock, he saw his captain looking sadly down on him.

"It's just as well, my man," he said, "that you couldn't be found; for I didn't sign you before the consul, and want no complications. However, I'll pay you here. Just sign this receipt—an even two months at three pounds a month."

"Ay, ay, sir—and thank you, cappen."

He reached up and secured the slip of paper and a pencil handed down; then, first examining the document with Scottish caution, knelt down and signed his name to a receipt for six pounds. Passing it up, he received a cylindrical roll of coins from the captain, and thanked him again. Then he turned to drop to the deck; but his foot slipping on the hard, painted rail, he came down on all fours, and the roll of coin left his grasp.

"Catch it—quick!" called the captain from above. "Look out for that scupper; it's rolling right into it."

Scotty made a frantic scramble towards his treasure, and just missed closing his fingers on it before it rolled into the scupper; then he heard the tinkling sound as it struck the water over the side.

"Domnation!" he roared, as he rose to his feet. "Twa months' pay gone to the de'il, and I never e'en laid eyes on it."

"I'm very sorry, my man," said the captain. "There were six gold sovereigns, and I have your receipt. I can't pay you again."

"Na, na, cappen," answered Scotty, as sadly as the captain. "'Tis na fault o' yourn, nor mine; it's my luck, and it'll ne'er change till I git to New York and find my old skipper. I'm under a curse, I am."

But the captain had gone.

"Want to get to New York?" asked a voice behind him.

"That I do," said Scotty, shortly, as he faced the speaker. It was the captain of the schooner.

"I'm a man short," he said. "Where's your clo's?"

"On my back, cappen. I lost twa months' pay the noo, and can't repleenish my wardrobe."

"It's fine weather, and you won't need any. I pay twenty a month. Turn to."

Scotty went to New York in this schooner—that is, he went as far as the Sandy Hook Lightship, where the skipper, a man of poor judgment, mistakingly put about under the bow of an outward-bound steamer, which had slowed down to discharge her pilot, and which went ahead too soon for the welfare of that schooner. The impact was not dead on—it was a glancing blow that the schooner received, and it only carried away the weather main rigging and the davit on the stern. But Scotty was at work in this weather main rigging, and foreseeing disaster to the frail spider web to which he clung, he leaped for the big

stockless anchor of the steamer just before it caught the shrouds. On this he sat perched, while wire rope snapped over and around him, and as the steamer forged ahead, managed to make himself heard over the shouts and curses with which the two skippers paid their parting compliments. He was lifted up and taken to the captain—a man black in the face from rage and overstrained vocabulary.

The captain greeted Scotty with inarticulate snorts.

"And can ye put me on some craft bound in, cappen?" asked Scotty, anxiously.

"Na-ow," roared the irate man. "Put you 'board nothing. Nor will I put you on the articles, curse you. I'll put you to work, and if you don't work your hands off, I'll charge you for your passage to Melbourne. Get out o' this."

"I tell ye," roared Scotty, in return, equally enraged at the prospect of another trip to the antipodes, "if ye don't get rid of me, ye'll no reach Melbourne. I'm a Jonah—a Jonah from the curse that has come to me. Put me ashore, ye poor, unfortunate fule."

Scotty was led away—after the gentle manner of the sea—and, in spite of his loud protestations that he was a competent able seaman, placed at the degrading labor of coal passing. When the cooler atmosphere of the stoke-hole had lowered his temperature somewhat, he again went to the captain and earnestly told his story—of his theft, his bad luck and the bad luck he had brought to others.

"The curse is a-warkin' and a-growin' on me, cappen," he concluded, sorrowfully. "I'm the line-e-al desceendent o' the Flyin' Dutchman, sir. And I'll wrack your ship wi'oot meanin' to."

"I've read the Bible," said the captain, calmly. "I know what to do with Jonahs. I always throw them overboard."

Scotty shoveled and wheeled coal for three months, then his prediction was fulfilled. Within a day's run to Melbourne, the screw slipped off the tail-shaft, and as it went to the bottom of the Indian Ocean, the racing engine went to pieces. This might not have prevented the steamer's reaching port under sail or tow, but the forward crank-pin broke, and the piston drove up with nothing to stop it, fetched up with a mighty jolt against the cylinder head—which held—and disconnected most of the bolts which bound the cylinder to its bed.

As the steamer fell off in the hollow of the sea, she rolled, and at the third roll the half-ton of metal toppled over, crashed down through the bottom of the ship, and sought the company of the screw. She was a compartmentless steamer, and in half an hour had followed, leaving her crew afloat in boats and on liferafts. Scotty found himself in the boat with the captain, and wisely anticipating rebuke, had brought his shovel. The captain glared unspeakable things at him.

"It'll do ye no good the noo, cappen," said Scotty, anticipating the captain's outburst. "And if you, or

a man o' your crew, lay the weight o' your finger upon me, I'll brain ye wi' my staff of office"—he elevated the shovel. "I warned ye in time; ye should ha' heeded me."

"Put down your shovel, and take an oar," commanded the captain. "I'd shoot you dead if it wasn't for the law. But you'll get out o' this boat, onto the first craft we meet—bound in or bound out."

"It'll be bound out, cappen," said Scotty, gravely. "Ha' no fear o' that."

It was an Italian bark, and as Scotty had predicted, she was bound out—to Rio Janeiro, as Scotty learned later. When the flotilla of boats swarmed into her path, she backed her main yards with much chattering and yelling of her crew, and Scotty's boat approached her side, where a Jacob's-ladder hung invitingly.

"Get up there, you miserable Sawnee," said the skipper. "I wouldn't put you aboard a white man's vessel, for you'll wreck her as you did mine."

It is very impolite, and sometimes inexpedient, to call a Scot a Sawnee.

Scotty climbed the ladder with his shovel, and when he stood upon the rail, turned and let it fly towards the captain in the stern-sheets. Had it struck edge first it would have cut him in two; as it happened, the handle merely flattened his nose. The captain sank down, then, rising, fired a revolver at Scotty, but missed, and forthwith ordered his men to give way.

And then, amid the excited cries and orders of the Italian captain, Scotty was pulled down from the rail, mobbed around the deck a little—though he fought furiously—by the three mates of the bark, and bundled into a hatch-house. And long after he was locked in he could hear the excited and puzzled accents of the Italian captain, calling to the misguided castaways, who would not be rescued; then he heard the yards braced, and knew that he was homeward bound.

"If the bloody hooker don't sink on the way," he growled. "Howe'er, I'll no revile the craft that carries me, for it's lang odds she gits the warst o' it."

Shipboard etiquette is international. Scotty, in throwing the shovel, had violated the strictest clause in the code, and the Italian captain, though understanding nothing of the circumstances, had sensed the enormity of his offense, and punished him. But he was not confined long; the door was soon opened, and from the jabbering and gestures of the three mates he understood that he was to go forward. He went, and with a bucket of salt water and a piece of old canvas so improved his personal appearance as to partly overrule the prejudice against him.

Seamanship, like nautical etiquette, is international, and though he understood not one word of what was said to him, and though not a man aboard understood him, yet he knew what to do without orders, and soon proved himself superior to any of the officers.

The rather impulsive, but generous, captain noticed this, and made as much of him as was possible without a common means of communication; but Scotty ascribed it to the influence of the unblessed, but jealously guarded, leather pendant often visible on his hairy chest. He made the most of this influence among the men forward, and even went to the blasphemous extent of making the sign of the cross on occasions, and repeating certain words, picked up from his devout shipmates, of the Roman Catholic ritual. But when he prayed, alone and in the silence of the night, he prayed for forgiveness, for the removal of the curse, for opportunity to redeem himself—for the test of a ten-mile swim or a thousand-mile walk, to the end that he might place that stolen dollar in the hand of Captain Bolt.

But his prayers availed not. He became a man without a country. The Italian bark caught fire in the South Atlantic, and in the confusion of abandoning the charred and sinking hulk, Scotty found himself alone in a small quarter-boat, which, like himself, had been left behind, and which he had lowered and unhooked unaided. But he had been unable to find the oars, and the other boats were far away; so he spent seven days and nights in the cockle-shell, freezing by night, roasting by day, with the horrors of hunger and thirst for company, and was then rescued in a delirious state of mind by a Norwegian barkentine, bound for Cape Town.

There is no need of recounting his further adventures in detail. He had now been a year without touching land, and he spent four more at sea before there came to him even a gleam of hope. No matter what the craft, or what the port bound for, something occurred to destroy the ship or prevent him finishing the passage. At times, when an alleged advance of pay was worked off, he drew clothing from the ship's slop chest, and always left it behind when the curse closed down upon him and removed him from that ship. Once he was abandoned with a boy, third mate, and three others on a derelict which they had been sent to inspect, and from the neighborhood of which a furious gale drove their own vessel. They were rescued just before the derelict sank. Again, in Manila Bay, he swam to a near-by ship which he had heard was bound to New York, and secreted himself, only to find when at sea that she was bound for Liverpool. He made the stormy passage of the Horn in midwinter with the clothing he stood in.

Too eager to touch dry land at Liverpool, he quit the ship in a runner's boat before docking, and the boat getting in the way of an outbound ocean-tug, he went to sea on the tug, and was again put aboard the first craft met, an English four-master, bound for Calcutta. And it was in this ship that there came to him the gleam of hope mentioned. In her forecastle he found the quondam third mate of the big skysail-yarder, the Mr. Smart who, backed by the law,

had thrashed him on the forecastle deck and later arranged his transfer to the tramp.

Scotty had long since forgiven him, regarding him as but an instrument of the Lord. But the instrument, down on his luck and 'fore-the-mast in a "lime-juicer," must needs refer to it, again and again, until the sorely tried man gave way. Then occurred one of the shortest and fiercest fights that ever delighted the souls of English sailors. Scotty did the fighting, and he struck out twice; but each blow was like the kick of a mule, and Smart was carried aft to have his broken ribs and jawbone reset, while Scotty went in irons for murderous assault; but the captain released him on learning that the war began in an American ship. There was no further trouble between these two, but Scotty drew comfort and hope from the incident because it seemed his first victory over the forces that opposed him.

Cholera was rampant in Calcutta, and not a man but the skipper left the ship while there; then she sailed for New York, and Scotty's hope increased. He carefully guarded the black and grimy talisman of evil that hung to his neck, and prayed fervently for the final test that would redeem him; and he prayed, too—for his great trouble had softened and spiritualized him—that this big ship and large company should not suffer disaster on his account.

But as the ship reached soundings it seemed that the prayer was to be unanswered; for she came driv-

ing up to the light-ship before a southerly gale and sea that prevented any sail holding but the foresail and three lower topsails. All lighter canvas was blown away—and lower topsails and a lee shore are a bad combination.

The captain could not conceal his anxiety; there had been no sign of a pilot, and though the holding ground was good, his anchors were small—too small for his big ship. To add to the danger, the spume and spindrift from the combers were thickened by a mist that seemed to descend from above, blotting out the distant light-ship. But this mist was ahead; astern, the horizon was visible, and far this side of the horizon—not half a mile on the port quarter—was a sight that sent the blood coursing through poor Scotty's veins, and a prayer of thanksgiving to his lips.

Coming along before the storm, but on a convergent course which would soon bring her in the big ship's wake, was the steamer *Proserpine* towing her barges. Scotty knew them; every detail was pictured on his brain. He knew that big funnel, and big nigger-head in the bow; he knew the stump bowsprit of the *Champion,* with its one-chain bobstay; and he knew the *Anita* behind her, straight-stemmed, black and dingy.

And as he looked there came to him the conviction that here was the test required of him—that if he, the Jonah of many ships, should remain where he was, there would be one more catastrophe on the list, while

some maneuvering of fate would again send him to sea; but that if he rid the ship of his presence, there was a chance, not only for the ship, but for himself.

Mounting the forecastle deck—where he had a right to be—he watched and waited until the three crafts astern were as one in the wake; then, shedding his oilskins and boots, he sprang overboard. He heard the shouts of a shipmate, and as he came to the surface, saw men on the rail, looking and waving. He saw the second mate heave over a life-buoy, but it fell short, and he did not swim for it. The ship went on, for a square-rigged craft may not round to in a gale.

Scotty swam shoreward at first, for he knew that the steamer and tow would make leeway. On the tops of the seas he took his bearings, and then swam, or paddled, according to the inclination of the steamer's bow. In the hollows he swam towards her. Nearer and nearer she came, and at last he began hailing; but not a man could be seen on her deck, and the bridge was empty; the captain or mate on duty was in the warm pilot-house, no doubt—after the manner of tug-men. Hailing frantically, he met the wash of her bow wave and went under; when he came up she was past him, with her white-painted name staring at him. No one had seen or heard him.

The *Champion* was coming, and he swam into her path, barely missing a clutch at the steel towline whizzing past him. He hailed her, but there was no re-

sponse. How could they hear, in the teeth of that furious wind? Realizing this, he saved his breath.

The barge, rolling along before the sea, was making good weather of it, yet she lifted and plunged heavily as the big billows passed beneath her—the chain bobstay often rising six feet out of water, and again sinking as far below. To catch this chain was all that he could hope for; to miss it meant death; for even should he be seen or heard as he passed astern, no power on earth could bring that tug back to windward in such a sea.

When but twenty feet away from him the bow lifted, dripping water from the hawse-pipes—and to the agonized man beneath it this bow and dripping hawse-pipes bore a harrowing resemblance to a large, implacable, yet weeping face, a face that expressed sorrow and condemnation—then it fell upon him, and the heavy iron chain struck his head, then glanced to his shoulder and bore him under. But the downward blow gave him his grip upon it; had it struck him while lifting, he might not have held.

Clinging for dear life, unable to move himself an inch against the rush of water, with head swimming from the impact of the chain, and lungs bursting from lack of air, he waited for the rise, and when it came, moved upward a foot. Then he was borne under again, this time with his lungs full of air, and he suffered less; and when he was lifted out, he gained another foot.

Four times he was plunged under before he had climbed high enough to avoid it, and then he rested, until his head cleared and the awful pain of fatigue left his arms. When strength came back he mounted to the bowsprit, crept in to the topgallant forecastle, and sprang down on the main-deck, to the consternation of two men at the weather fore-rigging. These were foremast hands, and Scotty had no present use for them. He ran past them in his stocking-feet—and they gave room to the wild-eyed apparition—and aft to the poop, where, besides the helmsman, was a man who might be captain or mate, but who could certainly inform him.

"Is Cappen Bolt in charge o' the *Anita* the noo?" he asked, hoarsely, as he halted before him.

"Yes. Who are you?" asked the astounded man.

"God be thankit!" exclaimed Scotty, and he mounted the taffrail—not for a swim this time, there was no need of it. Stretching back to the *Anita* was a steel trolley, which was all he wanted. Before the man could do more than yell at him, Scotty had hitched himself out on the towline beyond reach; then, for faster progress, he swung beneath it, head aft and downward, and in this position, hand over hand and leg over leg, he made his way along until the water took him. Filling his lungs with air and locking arms and legs around the rope, he let himself go; and he slid at the speed of the tug down the trolley and up

again, traversing half of the length of the towline beneath the surface.

He was nearly dead and fully blind when he felt air on his face, and had only time to take a breath when a following sea immersed him again. But with another breath, he began to climb.

Captain Bolt, aft on the poop, saw men on the *Champion* waving arms and pointing a megaphone his way. He could not hear, nor could he hope to from the bow, yet he ran forward. As he reached the forecastle steps, an unkempt figure came in over the bow —a big, rawboned man in dripping rags, with blood streaming from arms and legs, with a red, round, and sorrowful face bordered by long, matted, gray hair —with the gleam of incipient insanity in the eyes. He sprang off the forecastle and faced the captain.

"Cappen Bolt," he stammered, as he tore at a small leather bag with fingers and teeth. "Cappen—cappen —here it is. I've fetched it t' ye. I never spent it." From the bag came a stained and oxidized coin, which he forced into the amazed captain's hand. Then, sinking to his knees, he lifted his eyes to heaven, muttered a few inarticulate words, and fell over in a swoon.

"Here!" called the captain, sharply, to two of his men who had drawn near. "Take him below and strip him. Put him to bed, and I'll get some brandy. Lord knows who he is, or where he came from, but he's in a bad way."

Scotty was carried down the forecastle stairs and cared for; but he did not waken to drink the captain's brandy; the swoon took on the form of child-like sleep, and the sleep continued until the barges had made port and moored to the dock. Here, amid the confusion of making fast, opening hatches, and rigging cargo gear, Captain Bolt had about forgotten the mysterious stranger in his forecastle, and was only reminded of him when the captain of the *Champion* came aboard to inquire.

"He climbed up my bobstays, no doubt; he must have fallen overboard from that big Englishman that anchored in the Horseshoe. Went crazy in the water, I suppose. He went out on your towline like a monkey. I wouldn't ha' believed a man could stand it. He was three minutes under water."

"I can't make it out," said Captain Bolt. "He put this in my hand"—he held out the blackened dollar —"and then went daffy. He's down below now. No, here he comes."

Scotty had climbed to the deck. He stood near the hatch, looking about with a doubtful, bewildered air at the docks and shipping. Then his face cleared a little, and like a cat in a strange street he moved slowly and hesitatingly along the rail towards the fore rigging. Then with one bound he swung himself to the top of the rail, and a mighty upward jump landed him on the string-piece of the dock. Here he paused long enough to sink to his knees and elevate his clasped

hands; then he rose, walked hurriedly, and, breaking into a run, disappeared from sight behind the crowd of horses and trucks on the dock.

"By the Lord," exclaimed Captain Bolt, "I know him! It's Scotty. I lost him overboard off the Delaware capes five years ago. How'd he get picked up, I wonder? Where's he been? And this——" he produced the dollar. "I wonder if—why, very likely—a Scotchman has a conscience. Say, cappen, this seems funny. I put up a job on Scotty. I pretended to lose a dollar to see if he'd keep it, and he did. And I'll bet this is the one." He opened his knife and cut into the dingy coin. "Yes, it was a counterfeit."

XV.—The Mascot of "Troop I" *

By Stephen Chalmers

THE troop was just about scared to death when the Scoutmaster announced at the close of the meeting that the visitor would remain for an informal talk with the boys.

The visitor was a big man in more than height. He was a State Commissioner—the kind you spell with a big C—a Commissioner of Forests, or Weights, or something like that; and he happened, too, to have an official position with Boy Scout Headquarters. He was, so to speak, a heap big Scout, and Troop 1, Saranac Lake, which is away back in the Adirondacks, felt uneasy.

"There aren't many of you," said the Commissioner to the group of Scouts gathered about him, "but you're all good stuff. You have a chance most Boy Scouts don't get. You were all born in the big North

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Woods. You have inherited instincts that can't be driven into a boy with teaching. You don't have to be taught trailing, or woodcraft, except maybe for an organized way of handling them. You can open old trails as a good turn to the public. You can patrol the woods, report forest fires, and you can fight forest fires, too, as I hear you have been doing. I hear, too, that the Municipal Board picked this troop to select a Christmas tree; that you felled that tree in a neat way and brought it to the village, helped set it up, and then patrolled the crowd with your staffs, so the little kids crowding around Santa Claus's municipal wagon wouldn't get hurt in the crush."

This made the Scouts breathe a little easier.

"But there is more than that to this Scout game——"

The Scouts began to fidget again. They knew they were not going to be let down as easy as all that, especially by a big Scout like this who knew conditions all over the country.

"The thing that comes easy for you to do is good. But, like bravery, the best form of it is doing what you are afraid to do, or doing what isn't second nature for you to do. You belong to the second generation of the wilderness. There are towns now and you live in them, and it is in the towns——"

The big man suddenly hesitated. He was looking at a small black face that emerged from a khaki collar between two first class Scouts in the front row. The

Commissioner pointed at him and said, abruptly, breaking off his remarks:

"By the way, what's *your* name?"

The small black face went into strange contortions of embarrassment. It tried to hide like the ostrich, but the Scouts in front parted and revealed a little negro boy in Scout uniform with a tenderfoot badge pinned where it should be.

"I'm Smokey," said a faint voice. Then, remembering, he stiffened up, saluted the big man, and amplified:

"Dey calls me Smokey, sir. Dat's all de name I ever has. I'se just a li'l nigger, sir, but dey all's a moughty good bunch and dey don't mek no difference 'cause I ain't white."

There was a little applause and much grinning. The Commissioner of Forests, or Weights—I forget just what he was—stared in a queer way, then went on with his address from where he had left off.

I remember he laid particular stress on the fact that doing one's simple everyday duty was all right, but not just what was called a "Good Turn."

But all the time he was watching Smokey, who stood there drinking in every word and nudging his neighbor, a thin, pallid boy, who also wore a tenderfoot badge.

"What's *your* name?" the speaker broke off again to ask, pointing at Smokey's neighbor.

"I'm Jimmy," said he. "Smokey's me pal," he

added, scrambling to his feet with a belated salute. "We—we likes bein' Scouts, sir."

Smokey wriggled in absolute approval of Jimmy's loyalty and comment.

Again the Commissioner looked puzzled. He went on with his talk, however, and when he had finished and the Scouts had left, he went into the Scoutmaster's office to compare notes with him. But he dismissed the notes pretty swiftly and suddenly said to the Scoutmaster:

"Where did you pick up those two kids, Smokey, and his—his pal, Jimmy?"

"Oh, that's quite a yarn," said the Scoutmaster. "Both of them were New York newsboys. They got sick down there—ill-feeding, lack of care and so on, and drifted up here. We have a lot of invalids who come here for their health—rich mostly. But Jimmy and Smokey weren't rich. In fact, if a couple of our boys hadn't heard about them and done one of the best turns ever pulled off, I——"

The Commissioner leaned forward and tapped the Scoutmaster on the knee.

"Tell me the whole story," said he, his eyes sparkling. And the Scoutmaster did.

The Story the Scoutmaster Told

Smokey and Jimmy were newsboys in the big city. Smokey was much littler, I expect, when he invested his first pennies in papers and tried to hold his own

with the newsboy gang at the Grand Central Station. Jimmy was cock of the walk and had licked every newsboy on the stand. He looked little Smokey over. He resented the smokiness, but hated to wallop him; there was so little to wallop. And because the other newsboys tried to, Jimmy walloped the whole lot of them all over again. After that he felt sort of responsible for Smokey's welfare.

By and by Jimmy found out that Smokey never had had any parents. He came out of a colored orphan asylum—ran away, I expect. Jimmy didn't know anything about his parents, either. He came out of a foundling hospital—ran away, too, perhaps. Anyway, Jimmy says he felt he didn't have much on Smokey. They became close friends. Smokey thought Jimmy was God's little brother, and Jimmy proved it by taking absolute charge of Smokey's destiny.

They saved their pennies. Their living didn't cost much. They fed mostly at the back door of an east side quick-lunch place. For domicile they shared a basement with a drunken janitor, an Italian organ-grinder, and a monkey. The monkey got shoved off a second-story window ledge by some Christian person who probably resented the Darwin theory and died several days later of internal injuries. Smokey nursed him, while Jimmy and the organ-grinder worked harder and raised enough money to get a doctor. The doctor was indignant when he found that his patient was of the Simian persuasion. But that's a story by

itself. You ought to hear Jimmy tell it. You'd find yourself laughing on only one side of your face.

About a week after the monkey died, Smokey fell ill. He hated to get up in the morning. He was just as dead-tired in the morning as when he lay down. His smokiness turned from a soft coal to an anthracite hue, and he went off his feed. Jimmy thought maybe Smokey needed a little Christian Science and walloped him as an experiment. Smokey took it as he would have taken anything from Jimmy, but he said—and his eyes were probably as big and solemn as an owl's:

"Jimmy," said he, "dey ain't no use'n you-all wallopin' me. Hones', Jimmy, Ah tinks Ah's a moughty sick li'l nigger."

That stuck in Jimmy's mind. He was sorry he had applied what he thought was practical Christian Science. He tried Smokey with therapeutic treatment. He gave him a cone of strawberry ice-cream. When Smokey ate only half of it, Jimmy knew it was a grave case and that something ought to be done about it.

That night after Smokey had crawled into the packing case where he was in the habit of sleeping —usually with the lid on—Jimmy talked over the crisis with the organ-grinder and the janitor. The janitor thought corn whiskey was good and went out to get some. He didn't come back that night and brought no whiskey when he turned up two days later. The organ-grinder, embittered by the loss of his monkey, had little faith in the medical profession; and

in this Jimmy concurred. The newsboy, however, read the papers he sold, and was under the impression that Jimmy ought to get out into the country. Also, he wasn't sure that it was the best thing for Smokey to sleep in that packing-case with the lid on. Lacking funds, however, they were compelled to table the motion that Smokey be sent to the woods. Meanwhile Smokey got thinner and weaker and finally he hadn't the strength to push the lid off when he needed more air. It was then that the Lord provided.

One of Smokey's patrons was Pat Mulcahy, who drives the engine of the Montreal Express out of Grand Central every evening at 6.55. Smokey had been in the habit of taking a latest evening edition through to Pat in his engine cab. Mulcahy didn't get his paper one night, but next evening Jimmy turned up alongside the big locomotive and said:

"Here's yer paper, Mister Mulcahy. Smokey's down an' out. I tink he's got de Ol' Con. He worried hisself near stiff last night 'cos he fergot t' tell me youse was partic'lar 'bout gettin' de final. But don't youse worry, Mister, I'm runnin' the whole biz till Smokey's to rights again—see?"

Mulcahy was a good fellow. He'd bought from Smokey because—well, perhaps he liked the little fellow. He questioned Jimmy, and next night he cross-questioned him, about Smokey, and on the third night, when Jimmy reported the patient in a bad way, the engineer said:

"Now, lookee here, Jimmy. Can Smokey walk? Do you think he can stand a trip?"

"It couldn't make him no wuss, anyhow," says Jimmy.

"All right," said Mulcahy. "You get his things together. . . . Well just as he is, then . . . and bring him along here about 6.45 sharp to-morrow night—Hear?"

"I get yuh," said Jimmy. "Youse gonna give Smoky a free ride up to the country."

"You betcher life, Jimmy."

Smokey, when informed of this new turn of his destiny, didn't care much whether he went or stayed in his box; but Jimmy said he was to go, and of course that was all there was to it.

Next evening, when Smokey, the most washed-out little nigger that ever wobbled on weak knees, turned up at the station with Jimmy, the whole gang was there to give him a send-off. The guards let them all through the gates after the conductor of the Adirondack section had passed a wink, and the group of youngsters escorted Smokey to the big, wheezing engine. Jimmy first presented Mulcahy with his final, refusing the usual cent for it.

"Dat's on de house dis time," said Jimmy.

"Here—you—beat it!" said he. "Do you want to make me trouble?"

Smokey's eyes were full of tears as he said:

"So long, fellahs. You-all's a moughty good bunch."

Then he whispered something to Jimmy, who said, "Aw, fudge!" and went away, much embarrassed.

The engineer turned Smokey over to the conductor of the Adirondack section, and when the Montreal Express got under way he was comfortable on a pile of straw in a corner of the baggage car. At Poughkeepsie the conductor bought him a bottle of "pop." At Albany he fell heir to an orange and a chicken sandwich. At Utica he was sound asleep and a colored porter came through and spread a perfectly good Pullman blanket over the boy.

The train was wheezing at Tupper Lake when Smokey opened his eyes next morning. The baggage car door was opened and Smokey looked out. It was a big country, covered with trees and surrounded with great mountains. The sun was just rising and Smokey felt sure that this was the place where they made the movies. The golden east reminded him of his orange, and he ate it,—the orange.

The colored porter came through and told the boy to stay where he was until ordered to get out. Smokey was disappointed to learn that his friend Mulcahy had gone off duty at Utica, where his wife lived. Ten minutes later the porter came back again. He had a glass tumbler in his hand and it was half full of quarters and fifty-cent pieces.

"You is shuah a lucky kid," said the porter. "Some

o' de gents in de Lake Placid smoker heerd 'bout you an' chipped in all dis."

"Dey's shuah-all a good bunch—folks is," said Smokey, his eyes big as he totaled three dollars and twenty-five cents.

The Adirondacks section was switched off the main line at Lake Clear junction, and less than half an hour later Smokey found himself in the main street of Saranac Lake. He made straight for the belt of woods that fringes the river below the falls of the power station, and sat down beneath a big pine. He felt that he could sit there forever and listen to the gossipy river and the whispering trees. It was very restful. He ate some of his accumulated grub and went to sleep, his last thought a wish that Jimmy could be there.

Mr. Commissioner (the Scoutmaster continued), that little nigger was in town about six weeks before our boys got on to him. He was lucky enough to get a job delivering newspapers for Tom Daley and, luckier still, the little fellow began to get well.

So long as the nights were still summery he slept beneath that same pine below the falls, but when the Autumn snap set in he had to find shelter. It was Tolman, the undertaker—a good sort—good as they make 'em—who picked him up, asked a few questions and got him the loft of Fred Smith's paintshop. A ladder ascended to a trap door and the garret was full of old truck; but Smokey thought it was a mansion

with a marble staircase. He fixed up a couple of boxes for seats, and there was an old two-legged sofa that he propped up for a couch. He scurried around town, got hold of several burlap bags, stuffed them with hay and made himself a comfortable bed. Between this and improving health and the delivery business, Smokey felt that he was prospering in the world.

Then he got a letter. It was from Jimmy, to whom he had sent picture-postcards without getting a word in reply. But Jimmy's misspelled letter now explained everything.

"*Dere smoke*" (it ran—or something like that—I read it), "I hate tu tell ya for I dident think it was annything but I got the old Con too an im awful sick and duno whatin bleazes im gone do, say is there anny chanst up there where yu ar, but don you worry bout me. *Jimmy.*"

It was a terrible blow to Smokey, but right away the optimism that seems to breed itself in these woods bolstered him to action. He promptly sent a picture-postcard, and on it he wrote:

"yu se the injiner mr. Milcay, an come on up its fine an I got a swel plaze to liv and lots ov work, no selin jist deliverin. *Smokey.*"

But that was only the beginning of Smokey's discharge of obligation. He interviewed the Pullman conductor. The conductor passed the word to Mulcahy at Utica, and two days later the porter brought back word to the tense, waiting little figure at the

Saranac Lake station that it was all fixed and Jimmy was coming on by next night's train.

All that evening and all next day Smokey was mighty busy. He bolted the delivery of the New York papers, but at every house he stopped long enough to gasp:

"Please lady, has you-all got any ole pitcher supplements?"

In the evening he had a pile of them. He had begged leave of Mat Munn, the grocer, to extract nails from discarded boxes. With these, and a brick for a hammer, he covered the sloping roof walls of the garret mansion with stage beauties, art supplements, Buster Browns, Happy Hooligans, baseball giants and magazine covers. This art paneling covered every draughty hole or crack. Flour sacks draped Jimmy's sofa-couch. All that last night, while the Montreal Express brought Jimmy into the hills, there sounded the persistent tap-tapping of Smokey's brick hammer.

But in the morning when Jimmy, pale and sickly, climbed down from the baggage-car, there was no Smokey to meet or greet him. Jimmy wandered around, weakness of body conspiring with disappointment to sap his courage. He had no idea where Smokey lived and, being a New Yorker with a metropolitan turn of thought, in that circumstance he felt himself and Smokey completely lost to each other.

Presently, as Jimmy sat disconsolate on a baggage

truck, an individual in shirt sleeves and savoring of paint halted before him. After a moment's study he said:

"Hallo, Jimmy!"

Jimmy started, hope returning; but neither the man nor the savor of paint conveyed anything profitable.

"Aw, can the bunk stuff," said he wearily. "I'm f'm Forty-second Street—see?"

Fred the painter was able to extricate himself from suspicion, however. At the words "Smokey's all to the bad," Jimmy forgot everything, particularly himself and his own illness.

"Where izze?" he asked breathlessly. "I wanna see'm right away. D'yuh get me? Aw, don't you tell me that li'l nigger's gone an' croaked?"

"Naw, he ain't croaked," said Fred Smith, the painter, "but he's awful bad, and he sent me to meet you, Jimmy, and tell you to come right on just the same, 'cause everything's ready."

"He's up there," said Fred when they got to the shack. Jimmy, short of breath as he was, went up that ladder like a streak. At first he could see little, the garret was so dark, but a faint voice said from some burlap bags in the corner:

"Is dat youse, Chimmy?"

"What's de matter, Smoke?" Jimmy's voice was shaky and a short sharp cough punctuated his question.

"Bles' if Ah knows," said Smokey. "Ah was ham-

merin' a nail in Christy Mat'ewson when somet'in esploded in ma chiss. But say, Chimmy, light de can'le an' pipe de livin' room. Some—swell—Chimmy!—an' Ah done it a-all ma-se'f!"

Jimmy found the candle and lighted it. He surveyed Smokey lying in the corner, his eyes and head seeming a misfit for his frail body. The candle illumined the comic supplements and art sections on the sloping roof walls and the sofa with its flour-sack bedding turned down as for a guest. Lastly Jimmy's eyes encountered several dark red spots on the floor.

"Swell, ain't it, Chimmy?" said Smokey. "Why don't you-all say something?"

For answer Jimmy blew out the candle somewhat hastily, and Fred at the foot of the ladder heard some one sobbing in the mansion above.

The Scoutmaster turned to fumble with some papers on his desk. The Commissioner sat silent, his eyes wide and a bit shiny. He said nothing for at least half a minute, then, clearing his throat:

"And what then?"

"Oh, the rest is simple enough," said the Scoutmaster. "One of our Scouts got wind of it and told his patrol leader and they investigated. Then they got the other Scouts of the patrol together, went into the woods and cut some fuel, got a basket of grub and provisions from their mothers and a delegation of two called on Dr. Trudeau—you've heard of him—died just the other day—the Grenfell of the hills—

and the doctor sent a nurse and then moved Jimmy and Smokey to a hospital, and——"

The Scoutmaster broke off, chuckling.

"Funny thing," he said, "when the great doctor climbed the ladder to where the two boys were lying sick, Jimmy, remembering the doctor who wouldn't attend the monkey, got suspicious and he said to Dr. Trudeau: 'There's just wan thing you got to un'stand right away, Doc. Smokey may be a li'l nigger, but *he ain't no monk!* D'yuh get me?' "

They both got well, and they got work, too. Then one evening they came down to look over this Scout business that had helped them for not so much as a "thank you" and—well, Jimmy's a good little Scout. As for Smokey, he's the Troop Mascot, but—he still thinks Jimmy is God's little brother; and I don't know that I blame him."

"Fine!" said the Commissioner, and a few seconds later he repeated with even more emphasis, "FINE!"

XVI.—The Lion's Smile*

By Thomas W. Hanshew

Cleek, the Master Detective of Scotland Yard, or "the Man of Forty Faces," as he was sometimes called, solved the riddles that proved too much for his friend, Mr. Maverick Narkom, Superintendent of Police. I am confident boys will enjoy meeting "Cleek" and will, with keen delight, follow him as he unravels the threads of the great mystery of the "lion's smile."—THE EDITOR.

IT was on the very stroke of five when Cleek, answering an urgent message from headquarters, strolled into the bar parlor of "The Fiddle and Horseshoe," which, as you may possibly know, stands near to the Green in a somewhat picturesque by-path between Shepherd's Bush and Acton, and found Narkom in the very act of hanging up his hat and withdrawing his gloves preparatory to ordering tea.

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"My dear Cleek, what a model of punctuality you are," said the superintendent, as he came forward and shook hands with him. "You would put Father Time himself to the blush with your abnormal promptness. Do make yourself comfortable for a moment or two while I go and order tea. I've only just arrived. Shan't be long, old chap."

"Pray don't hurry yourself upon my account, Mr. Narkom," replied Cleek, as he tossed his hat and gloves upon a convenient table and strolled leisurely to the window and looked out on the quaint, old-fashioned arbor-bordered bowling green, all steeped in sunshine and zoned with the froth of pear and apple blooms, thick-piled above the time-stained brick of the enclosing wall. "These quaint old inns, which the march of what we are pleased to call 'progress' is steadily crowding off the face of the land, are always deeply interesting to me; I love them. What a day! What a picture! What a sky! As blue as what Dollops calls the 'Merry Geranium Sea.' I'd give a Jew's eye for a handful of those apple blossoms, they are divine!"

Narkom hastened from the room without replying. The strain of poetry underlying the character of this strange, inscrutable man, his amazing love of Nature, his moments of almost womanish weakness and sentiment, astonished and mystified him. It was as if a hawk had acquired the utterly useless trick of fluting like a nightingale, and being himself wholly without

imagination, he could not comprehend it in the smallest degree.

When he returned a few minutes later, however, the idealist seemed to have simmered down into the materialist, the extraordinary to have become merged in the ordinary, for he found his famous ally no longer studying the beauties of Nature, but giving his whole attention to the sordid commonplaces of man. He was standing before a glaringly printed bill, one of many that were tacked upon the walls, which set forth in amazing pictures and double-leaded type the wonders that were to be seen daily and nightly at Olympia, where, for a month past, "Van Zant's Royal Belgian Circus and World-famed Menagerie" had been holding forth to "Crowded and delighted audiences." Much was made of two "star turns" upon this lurid bill: "Mademoiselle Marie de Zanoni, the beautiful and peerless bare-back equestrienne, the most daring lady rider in the universe," for the one; and, for the other, "Chevalier Adrian di Roma, king of the animal world, with his great aggregation of savage and ferocious wild beasts, including the famous man-eating African lion, Nero, the largest and most ferocious animal of its species in captivity." And under this latter announcement there was a picture of a young and handsome man, literally smothered with medals, lying at full length, with his arms crossed and his head in the wide-open jaws of a snarling, wild-eyed lion.

"My dear chap, you really do make me believe that

there actually is such a thing as instinct," said Narkom, as he came in. "Fancy your selecting that particular bill out of all the others in the room! What an abnormal individual you are!"

"Why? Has it anything to do with the case you have in hand?"

"Anything to do with it? My dear fellow, it *is* 'the case.' I can't imagine what drew your attention to it."

"Can't you?" said Cleek, with a half smile. Then he stretched forth his hand and touched the word "Nero" with the tip of his forefinger. "That did. Things awaken a man's memory occasionally, Mr. Narkom, and—— Tell me, isn't that the beast there was such a stir about in the newspapers a fortnight or so ago, the lion that crushed the head of a man in full view of the audience?"

"Yes," replied Narkom, with a slight shudder. "Awful thing, wasn't it? Gave me the creeps to read about it. The chap who was killed, poor beggar, was a mere boy, not twenty, son of the Chevalier di Roma himself. There was a great stir about it. Talk of the authorities forbiding the performance, and all that sort of thing. They never did, however, for on investigation—— Ah, the tea at last, thank fortune. Come, sit down, my dear fellow, and we'll talk whilst we refresh ourselves. Landlady, see that we are not disturbed, will you, and that nobody is admitted but the parties I mentioned?"

"Clients?" queried Cleek, as the door closed and they were alone together.

"Yes. One, Mlle. Zelie, the 'chevalier's' only daughter, a slack-wire artist; the other, Signor Scarmelli, a trapeze performer, who is the lady's fiancé."

"Ah, then our friend the chevalier is not so young as the picture on the bill would have us believe he is."

"No, he is not. As a matter of fact, he is considerably past forty, and is, or rather, was, up to six months ago, a widower, with three children, two sons and a daughter."

"I suppose," said Cleek, helping himself to a buttered scone, "I am to infer from what you say that at the period mentioned, six months ago, the intrepid gentleman showed his courage yet more forcibly by taking a second wife? Young or old?"

"Young," said Narkom in reply. "Very young, not yet four-and-twenty, in fact, and very, very beautiful. That is she who is 'featured' on the bill as the star of the equestrian part of the program: 'Mlle. Marie de Zanoni.' So far as I have been able to gather, the affair was a love match. The lady, it appears, had no end of suitors, both in and out of the profession; it has even been hinted that she could, had she been so minded, have married an impressionable young Austrian nobleman of independent means who was madly in love with her; but she appears to have considered it preferable to become 'an old man's darling,' so to speak, and to have selected the middle-aged chevalier

rather than some one whose age is nearer her own."

"Nothing new in that, Mr. Narkom. Young women before Mlle. Marie de Zanoni's day have been known to love elderly men sincerely: young Mrs. Bawdrey, in the case of 'The Nine-fingered Skeleton,' is an example of that. Still, such marriages are not common, I admit, so when they occur one naturally looks to see if there may not be 'other considerations' at the bottom of the attachment. Is the chevalier well-to-do? Has he expectations of any kind?"

"To the contrary; he has nothing, but the salary he earns, which is by no means so large as the public imagines; and as he comes of a long line of circus performers, all of whom died early and poor, 'expectations,' as you put it, do not enter into the affair at all. Apparently the lady did marry him for love of him, as she professes and as he imagines; although, if what I hear is true, it would appear that she has lately outgrown that love. It seems that a Romeo more suitable to her age has recently joined the show in the person of a rider called Signor Antonio Martinelli; that he has fallen desperately in love with her, and that——"

He bit off his words short and rose to his feet. The door had opened suddenly to admit a young man and a young woman, who entered in a state of nervous excitement. "Ah, my dear Mr. Scarmelli, you and Miss Zelie are most welcome," continued the superintendent.

"My friend and I were this moment talking about you."

Cleek glanced across the room, and, as was customary with him, made up his mind instantly. The girl, despite her association with the arena, was a modest, unaffected little thing of about eighteen; the man was a straight-looking, clear-eyed, boyish-faced young fellow of about eight-and-twenty, well, but by no means flashily, dressed, and carrying himself with the air of one who respects himself and demands the respect of others. He was evidently an Englishman, despite his Italian *nom de théâtre*, and Cleek decided out of hand that he liked him.

"We can shelve 'George Headland' in this instance, Mr. Narkom," he said, as the superintendent led forward the pair for the purpose of introducing them, and suffered himself to be presented in the name of Cleek.

The effect of this was electrical; would, in fact, had he been a vain man have been sufficient to gratify him to the fullest, for the girl, with a little "Oh!" of amazement, drew back and stood looking at him with a sort of awe that rounded her eyes and parted her lips, while the man leaned heavily upon the back of a convenient chair and looked and acted as one utterly overcome.

"Cleek!" he repeated, after a moment's despairful silence. "You, sir, are that great man? This is a misfortune indeed."

"A misfortune, my friend? Why a 'misfortune,' pray? Do you think the riddle you have brought is beyond my powers?"

"Oh, no; not that—never that!" he made reply. "If there is any one man in the world who could get at the bottom of it, could solve the mystery of the lion's change, the lion's smile, you are that man, sir, you. That is the misfortune: that you could do it, and yet I cannot expect it, cannot avail myself of this great opportunity. Look! I am doing it all on my own initiative, sir, for the sake of Zelie and that dear, lovable old chap, her father. I have saved fifty-eight pounds, Mr. Cleek. I had hoped that that might tempt a clever detective to take up the case; but what is such a sum to such a man as you?"

"If that is all that stands in the way, don't let it worry you, my good fellow," said Cleek, with a smile. "Put your fifty-eight pounds in your pocket against your wedding-day and good luck to you. I'll take the case for nothing. Now then, what is it? What the dickens did you mean just now when you spoke about 'the lion's change' and 'the lion's smile'? What lion—Nero? Here, sit down and tell me all about it."

"There is little enough to tell, Heavens knows," said young Scarmelli, with a sigh, accepting the invitation after he had gratefully wrung Cleek's hand, and his fiancée, with a burst of happy tears, had caught it up as it slipped from his and had covered it with

thankful kisses. "That, Mr. Cleek, is where the greatest difficulty lies, there is so little to explain that has any bearing upon the matter at all. It is only that the lion, Nero, that is, the chevalier's special pride and special pet, seems to have undergone some great and inexplicable change, as though he is at times under some evil spell, which lasts but a moment and yet makes that moment a tragical one. It began, no one knows why nor how, two weeks ago, when, without hint or warning, he killed the person he loved best in all the world, the chevalier's eldest son. Doubtless you have heard of that?"

"Yes," said Cleek. "But what you are now telling me sheds a new light upon the matter. Am I to understand, then, that all that talk, on the bills and in the newspapers, about the lion being savage and a dangerous one is not true, and that he really is attached to his owner and his owner's family?"

"Yes," said Scarmelli. "He is indeed the gentlest, most docile, most intelligent beast of his kind living. In short, sir, there's not a 'bite' in him; and, added to that, he is over thirty years old. Zelie, Miss di Roma, will tell you that he was born in captivity; that from his earliest moment he has been the pet of her family; that he was, so to speak, raised with her and her brothers; that, as children, they often slept with him; and that he will follow those he loves like any dog, fight for them, protect them, let them tweak his ears and pull his tail without showing the slightest resent-

ment, even though they may actually hurt him. Indeed, he is so general a favorite, Mr. Cleek, that there isn't an attendant connected with the show who would not, and, indeed, has not at some time, put his head in the beast's mouth, just as the chevalier does in public, certain that no harm could possibly come of the act.

"You may judge, then, sir, what a shock, what a horrible surprise it was when the tragedy of two weeks ago occurred. Often, to add zest to the performance, the chevalier varies it by allowing his children to put their heads into Nero's mouth instead of doing so himself, merely making a fake of it that he has the lion under such control that he will respect any command given by him. That is what happened on that night. Young Henri was chosen to put his head into Nero's mouth, and did so without fear or hesitation. He took the beast's jaws and pulled them apart, and laid his head within them, as he had done a hundred times before; but, of a sudden an appalling, an uncanny, thing happened. It was as though some supernatural power laid hold of the beast and made a thing of horror of what a moment before had been a noble-looking animal. Suddenly a strange hissing noise issued from its jaws, its lips curled upward until it smiled—smiled, Mr. Cleek!—oh, the ghastliest, most awful, most blood-curdling smile imaginable, and then, with a sort of mingled snarl and bark, it clamped its

jaws together and crushed the boy's head as though it were an egg-shell!"

He put up his hands and covered his eyes as if to shut out some appalling vision, and for a moment or two nothing was heard but the low sobbing of the victim's sister.

"As suddenly as that change had come over the beast, Mr. Cleek," Scarmelli went on presently, "just so suddenly it passed, and it was the docile, affectionate animal it had been for years. It seemed to understand that some harm had befallen its favorite—for Henri was its favorite—and, curling itself up beside his body, it licked his hands and moaned disconsolately in a manner almost human. That's all there is to tell, sir, save that at times the horrid change, the appalling smile, repeat themselves when either the chevalier or his son bend to put a head within its jaws, and but for their watchfulness and quickness the tragedy of that other awful night would surely be repeated. Sir, it is not natural; I know now, as surely as if the lion itself had spoken, that some one is at the bottom of this ghastly thing, that some human agency is at work, some unknown enemy of the chevalier's is doing something, God alone knows what or why, to bring about his death as his son's was brought about."

And here, for the first time, the chevalier's daughter spoke.

"Ah, tell him all, Jim, tell him all!" she said, in her pretty broken English. "Monsieur, may the good

God in heaven forgive me if I wrong her; but—but—— Ah, Monsieur Cleek, sometimes I feel that she, my stepmother, and that man, that 'rider' who knows not how to ride as the artist should, monsieur, I cannot help it, but I feel that they are at the bottom of it."

"Yes, but why?" queried Cleek. "I have heard of your father's second marriage, mademoiselle, and of this Signor Antonio Martinelli, to whom you allude. Mr. Narkom has told me. But why should you connect these two persons with this inexplicable thing? Does your father do so, too?"

"Oh, no! oh, no!" she answered excitedly. "He does not even know that we suspect, Jim and I. He loves her, monsieur. It would kill him to doubt her."

"Then why should you?"

"Because I cannot help it, monsieur. God knows, I would if I could, for I care for her dearly, I am grateful to her for making my father happy. My brothers, too, cared for her. We believed she loved him; we believed it was because of that that she married him. And yet—and yet—— Ah, monsieur, how can I fail to feel as I do when this change in the lion came with that man's coming? And she—ah, monsieur, why is she always with him? Why does she curry favor of him and his rich friend?"

"He has a rich friend, then?"

"Yes, monsieur. The company was in difficulties; Monsieur van Zant, the proprietor, could not make it

pay, and it was upon the point of disbanding. But suddenly this indifferent performer, this rider who is, after all, but a poor amateur and not fit to appear with a company of trained artists, suddenly this Signor Martinelli comes to Monsieur van Zant to say that, if he will engage him, he has a rich friend, one Señor Sperati, a Brazilian coffee planter, who will 'back' the show with his money, and buy a partnership in it. Of course M. van Zant accepted; and since then this Señor Sperati has traveled everywhere with us, has had the entrée like one of us, and his friend, the bad rider, has fairly bewitched my stepmother, for she is ever with him, ever with them both, and—and—— Ah, mon Dieu! the lion smiles, and my people die! Why does it 'smile' for no others? Why is it only they, my father, my brother, they alone?"

"Is that a fact?" said Cleek, turning to young Scarmelli. "You say that all connected with the circus have so little fear of the beast that even attendants sometimes do this foolhardy trick? Does the lion never 'smile' for any of those?"

"Never, Mr. Cleek, never under any circumstances. Nor does it always smile for the chevalier and his son. That is the mystery of it. One never knows when it is going to happen; one never knows why it does happen. But if you could see that uncanny smile——"

"I should like to," interposed Cleek. "That is, if it might happen without any tragical result. Humm-m! Nobody but the chevalier and the chevalier's

son! And when does it happen in their case, during the course of the show, or when there is nobody about but those connected with it?"

"Oh, always during the course of the entertainment, sir. Indeed, it has never happened at any other time —never at all."

"Oho!" said Cleek. "Then it is only when they are dressed and made up for the performance, eh? Humm-m! I see." Then he lapsed into silence for a moment, and sat tracing circles on the floor with the toe of his boot. But, of a sudden: "You came here directly after the matinée, I suppose?" he queried, glancing up at young Scarmelli.

"Yes; in fact, before it was wholly over."

"I see. Then it is just possible that all the performers have not yet got into their civilian clothes. Couldn't manage to take me round behind the scenes, so to speak, if Mr. Narkom will lend us his motor to hurry us there? Could, eh? That's good. I think I'd like to have a look at that lion and, if you don't mind, an introduction to the parties concerned. No! don't fear; we won't startle anybody by revealing my identity or the cause of the visit. Let us say that I'm a vet. to whom you have appealed for an opinion regarding Nero's queer conduct. All ready, Mr. Narkom? Then let's be off."

Two minutes later the red limousine was at the door, and, stepping into it with his two companions,

he was whizzed away to Olympia and the first step toward the solution of the riddle.

II

As it is the custom of those connected with the world of the circus to eat, sleep, have their whole being, as it were, within the environment of the show, to the total exclusion of hotels, boarding-houses, or outside lodgings of any sort, he found on his arrival at his destination the entire company assembled in what was known as the "living-tent," chatting, laughing, reading, playing games and killing time generally whilst waiting for the call to the "dining-tent," and this gave him an opportunity to meet all the persons connected with the "case," from the "chevalier" himself to the Brazilian coffee planter who was "backing" the show.

He found this latter individual a somewhat sullen and taciturn man of middle age, who had more the appearance of an Austrian than a Brazilian, and with a swinging gait and an uprightness of bearing which were not to be misunderstood.

"Humph! Known military training," was Cleek's mental comment as soon as he saw the man walk. "Got it in Germany, too; I know that peculiar 'swing.' What's his little game, I wonder? And what's a Brazilian doing in the army of the Kaiser? And, having been in it, what's he doing dropping into this line;

backing a circus, and traveling with it like a Bohemian?"

But although these thoughts interested him, he did not put them into words nor take anybody into his confidence regarding them.

As for the other members of the company, he found "the indifferent rider," known as Signor Antonio Martinelli, an undoubted Irishman of about thirty years of age, extremely handsome, but with a certain "shiftiness" of the eye which was far from inspiring confidence, and with a trick of the tongue which suggested that his baptismal certificate probably bore the name of Anthony Martin. He found, too, that all he had heard regarding the youth and beauty of the chevalier's second wife was quite correct, and although she devoted herself a great deal to the Brazilian coffee planter and the Irish-Italian "Martinelli," she had a way of looking over at her middle-aged spouse, without his knowledge, that left no doubt in Cleek's mind regarding the real state of her feelings toward the man. And last, but not least by any means, he found the chevalier himself a frank, open-minded, open-hearted, lovable man, who ought not, in the natural order of things, to have an enemy in the world. Despite his high-falutin *nom de théâtre,* he was a Belgian, a big, soft-hearted, easy-going, unsuspicious fellow, who worshiped his wife, adored his children, and loved every creature of the animal world.

How well that love was returned, Cleek saw when

he went with him to that part of the building where his animals were kept, and watched them "nose" his hand or lick his cheek whenever the opportunity offered. But Nero, the lion, was perhaps the greatest surprise of all, for so tame, so docile, so little feared was the animal, that its cage door was open, and they found one of the attendants squatting cross-legged inside and playing with it as though it were a kitten.

"There he is, doctor," said the chevalier, waving his hand toward the beast. "Ah, I will not believe that it was anything but an accident, sir. He loved my boy. He would hurt no one that is kind to him. Fetch him out, Tom, and let the doctor see him at close quarters."

Despite all these assurances of the animal's docility Cleek could not but remember what the creature had done, and, in consequence, did not feel quite at ease when it came lumbering out of the cage with the attendant and ranged up alongside of him, rubbing its huge head against the chevalier's arm after the manner of an affectionate cat.

"Don't be frightened, sir," said Tom, noticing this. "Nothing more'n a big dog, sir. Had the care of him for eight years, I have—haven't I, chevalier?—and never a growl or scratch out of him. No 'smile' for your old Tom, is there, Nero, boy, eh? No fear! Ain't a thing as anybody does with him, sir, that I wouldn't do off-hand and feel quite safe."

"Even to putting your head in his mouth?" queried Cleek.

"Lor', yes!" returned the man, with a laugh. "That's nothing. Done it many a day. Look here!" With that he pulled the massive jaws apart, and, bending down, laid his head within them. The lion stood perfectly passive, and did not offer to close his mouth until it was again empty. It was then that Cleek remembered, and glanced round at young Scarmelli.

"He never 'smiles' for any but the chevalier and his son, I believe you said," he remarked. "I wonder if the chevalier himself would be as safe if he were to make a feint of doing that?" For the chevalier, like most of the other performers, had not changed his dress after the matinee, since the evening performance was so soon to begin; and if, as Cleek had an idea, the matter of costume and make-up had anything to do with the mystery of the thing, here, surely, was a chance to learn.

"Make a feint of it? Certainly I will, doctor," the chevalier replied. "But why a feint? Why not the actual thing?"

"No, please—at least, not until I have seen how the beast is likely to take it. Just put your head down close to his muzzle, chevalier. Go slow, please, and keep your head at a safe distance."

The chevalier obeyed. Bringing his head down until it was on a level with the animal's own, he opened the ponderous jaws. The beast was as passive as before; and, finding no trace of the coming of the mysterious and dreaded "smile," he laid his face be-

tween the double row of gleaming teeth, held it there a moment, and then withdrew it uninjured. Cleek took his chin between his thumb and forefinger and pinched it hard. What he had just witnessed would seem to refute the idea of either costume or make-up having any bearing upon the case.

"Did you do that to-day at the matinée performance, chevalier?" he hazarded, after a moment's thoughtfulness.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "It was not my plan to do so, however. I alter my performance constantly to give variety. To-day I had arranged for my little son to do the trick; but somehow—— Ah! I am a foolish man, monsieur; I have odd fancies, odd whims, sometimes odd fears, since—since that awful night. Something came over me at the last moment, and just as my boy came into the cage to perform the trick I changed my mind. I would not let him do it. I thrust him aside and did the trick myself."

"Oho!" said Cleek. "Will the boy do it to-night, then, chevalier?"

"Perhaps," he made reply. "He is still dressed for it. Look, here he comes now, monsieur, and my wife, and some of our good friends with him. Ah, they are so interested, they are anxious to hear what report you make upon Nero's condition."

Cleek glanced round. Several members of the company were advancing toward them from the "living-tent." In the lead was the boy, a little fellow of

about twelve years of age, fancifully dressed in tights and tunic. By his side was his stepmother, looking pale and anxious. But although both Signor Martinelli and the Brazilian coffee planter came to the edge of the tent and looked out, it was observable that they immediately withdrew, and allowed the rest of the party to proceed without them.

"Dearest, I have just heard from Tom that you and the doctor are experimenting with Nero," said the chevalier's wife, as she came up with the others and joined him. "Oh, do be careful, do! Much as I like the animal, doctor, I shall never feel safe until my husband parts with it or gives up that ghastly 'trick.' "

"My dearest, my dearest, how absurdly you talk!" interrupted her husband. "You know well that without that my act would be commonplace, that no manager would want either it or me. And how, pray, should we live if that were to happen?"

"There would always be my salary; we could make that do."

"As if I would consent to live upon your earnings and add nothing myself! No, no! I shall never do that, never. It is not as though that foolish dream of long ago had come true, and I might hope one day to retire. I am of the circus, and of it I shall always remain."

"I wish you might not; I wish the dream might come true, even yet," she made reply. "Why shouldn't

it? Wilder ones have come true for other people; why should they not for you?"

Before her husband could make any response to this, the whole trend of the conversation was altered by the boy.

"Father," he said, "am I to do the trick to-night? Señor Sperati says it is silly of me to sit about all dressed and ready if I am to do nothing, like a little super, instead of a performer, and an artist."

"Oh, but that is not kind of the señor to say that," his father replied, soothing his ruffled feelings. "You are an artist, of course; never super—no, never. But if you shall do the trick or not, I cannot say. It will depend, as it did at the matinée. If I feel it is right, you shall do it; but if I feel it is wrong, then it must be no. You see, doctor," catching Cleek's eye, "what a little enthusiast he is, and with how little fear."

"Yes, I do see, chevalier; but I wonder if he would be willing to humor me in something? As he is not afraid, I've an odd fancy to see how he'd go about the thing. Would you mind letting him make the feint you yourself made a few minutes ago? Only, I must insist that in this instance it be nothing more than a feint, chevalier. Don't let him go too near at the time of doing it. Don't let him open the lion's jaws with his own hands. You do that. Do you mind?"

"Of a certainty not, monsieur. Gustave, show the good doctor how you go about it when papa lets you do the trick. But you are not really to do it just yet,

only to bend the head near to Nero's mouth. Now then, come see."

As he spoke he divided the lion's jaws and signaled the child to bend. He obeyed. Very slowly the little head drooped nearer to the gaping, full-fanged mouth, very slowly and very carefully, for Cleek's hand was on the boy's shoulder, Cleek's eyes were on the lion's face. The huge brute was as meek and as undisturbed as before, and there was actual kindness in its fixed eyes. But of a sudden, when the child's head was on a level with those gaping jaws, the lips curled backward in a ghastly parody of a smile, a weird, uncanny sound whizzed through the bared teeth, the passive body bulked as with a shock, and Cleek had just time to snatch the boy back when the great jaws struck together with a snap that would have splintered a skull of iron had they closed upon it.

The hideous and mysterious "smile" had come again, and, brief though it was, its passing found the boy's sister lying on the ground in a dead faint, the boy's stepmother cowering back, with covered eyes and shrill, affrighted screams, and the boy's father leaning, shaken and white, against the empty cage and nursing a bleeding hand.

In an instant the whole place was in an uproar. "It smiled again! It smiled again!" ran in broken gasps from lip to lip; but through it all Cleek stood there, clutching the frightened child close to him, but not saying one word, not making one sound. Across

the dark arena came a rush of running footsteps, and presently Señor Sperati came panting up, breathless and pale with excitement.

"What's the matter? What's wrong?" he cried. "Is it the lion again? Is the boy killed? Speak up!"

"No," said Cleek very quietly, "nor will he be. The father will do the trick to-night, not the son. We've had a fright and a lesson, that's all." And, putting the sobbing child from him, he caught young Scarmelli's arm and hurried him away. "Take me somewhere that we can talk in safety," he said. "We are on the threshold of the end, Scarmelli, and I want your help."

"Oh, Mr. Cleek, have you any idea, any clue?"

"Yes, more than a clue. I know how, but I have not yet discovered why. Now, if you know, tell me what did the chevalier mean, what did his wife mean, when they spoke of a dream that might have come true but didn't? Do you know? Have you any idea? Or, if you have not, do you think your fiancée has?"

"Why, yes," he made reply. "Zelie has told me about it often. It is of a fortune that was promised and never materialized. Oh, such a long time ago, when he was quite a young man, the chevalier saved the life of a very great man, a Prussian nobleman of great wealth. He was profuse in his thanks and his promises, that nobleman; swore that he would make him independent for life, and all that sort of thing."

"And didn't?"

"No, he didn't. After a dozen letters promising the chevalier things that almost turned his head, the man dropped him entirely. In the midst of his dreams of wealth a letter came from the old skinflint's steward enclosing him the sum of six hundred marks, and telling him that as his master had come to the conclusion that wealth would be more of a curse than a blessing to a man of his class and station, he had thought better of his rash promise. He begged to tender the enclosed as a proper and sufficient reward for the service rendered, and 'should not trouble the young man any further.' Of course, the chevalier didn't reply. Who would, after having been promised wealth, education, everything one had confessed that one most desired? Being young, high-spirited, and bitterly, bitterly disappointed, the chevalier bundled the six hundred marks back without a single word, and that was the last he ever heard of the Baron von Steinheid from that day to this."

"The Baron von Steinheid?" repeated Cleek, pulling himself up as though he had trodden upon something. "Do you mean to say that the man whose life he saved—— Scarmelli, tell me something: Does it happen by any chance that the 'Chevalier di Roma's' real name is Peter Janssen Pullaine?"

"Yes," said Scarmelli, in reply. "That is his name. Why?"

"Nothing, but that it solves the riddle, and the lion has smiled for the last time! No, don't ask me any

questions; there isn't time to explain. Get me as quickly as you can to the place where we left Mr. Narkom's motor. Will this way lead me out? Thanks! Get back to the others, and look for me again in two hours' time; and Scarmelli?"

"Yes, sir?"

"One last word: don't let that boy get out of your sight for one instant, and don't, no matter at what cost, let the chevalier do his turn to-night before I get back. Good-bye for a time. I'm off."

Then he moved like a fleetly passing shadow round the angle of the building, and two minutes later was with Narkom in the red limousine.

"To the German embassy as fast as we can fly," he said as he scrambled in. "I've something to tell you about that lion's smile, Mr. Narkom, and I'll tell it while we're on the wing."

III

It was nine o'clock and after. The great show at Olympia was at its height; the packed house was roaring with delight over the daring equestrianship of "Mademoiselle Marie de Zanoni," and the sound of the cheers rolled in to the huge dressing-tent, where the artists awaited their several turns, and the chevalier, in spangled trunks and tights, all ready for his call, sat hugging his child and shivering like a man with the ague.

"Come, come, buck up, man, and don't funk it like this," said Señor Sperati, who had graciously consented to assist him with his dressing because of the injury to his hand. "The idea of you losing your nerve, you of all men, and because of a little affair like that. You know very well that Nero is as safe as a kitten to-night, that he never has two smiling turns in the same week, much less the same day. Your act's the next on the program. Buck up and go at it like a man."

"I can't, señor, I can't!" almost wailed the chevalier. "My nerve is gone. Never, if I live to be a thousand, shall I forget that awful moment, that appalling 'smile.' I tell you there is wizardry in the thing; the beast is bewitched. My work in the arena is done, done forever, señor. I shall never have courage to look into the beast's jaws again.

"Rot! You're not going to ruin the show, are you, and after all the money I've put into it? If you have no care for yourself, it's your duty to think about me. You can at least try. I tell you you must try! Here, take a sip of brandy, and see if that won't put a bit of courage into you. Hallo!" as a burst of applause and the thud of a horse's hoofs down the passage to the stables came rolling in, "there's your wife's turn over at last; and there—listen! the ringmaster is announcing yours. Get up, man; get up and go out."

"I can't, señor, I can't! I can't!"

"But I tell you you must."

And just here an interruption came.

"Bad advice, my dear captain," said a voice, Cleek's voice, from the other end of the tent; and with a twist and a snarl the "señor" screwed round on his heel in time to see that other intruders were putting in an appearance as well as this unwelcome one.

"Who the deuce asked you for your opinion?" rapped out the "señor" savagely. "And what are you doing in here, anyhow? If we want the service of a vet., we're quite capable of getting one for ourselves without having him shove his presence upon us unasked."

"You are quite capable of doing a great many things, my dear captain, even making lions smile!" said Cleek serenely. "It would appear that the gallant Captain von Gossler, nephew, and, in the absence of one who has a better claim, heir to the late Baron von Steinheid—— That's it, nab the beggar. Played, sir, played! Hustle him out and into the cab, with his precious confederate, the Irish-Italian 'signor,' and make a clean sweep of the pair of them. You'll find it a neck-stretching game, captain, I'm afraid, when the jury comes to hear of that poor boy's death and your beastly part in it."

By this time the tent was in an uproar, for the chevalier's wife had come hurrying in, the chevalier's daughter was on the verge of hysterics, and the chevalier's prospective son-in-law was alternately hugging the great beast-tamer and then shaking his hand and

generally deporting himself like a respectable young man who had suddenly gone daft.

"Governor!" he cried, half laughing, half sobbing. "Bully old governor. It's over—it's over. Never any more danger, never any more bad times, never any more lion's smiles."

"No, never," said Cleek. "Come here, Madame Pullaine, and hear the good news with the rest. You married for love, and you've proved a brick. The dream's come true, and the life of ease and of luxury is yours at last, Mr. Pullaine."

"But, sir, I—I do not understand," stammered the chevalier. "What has happened? Why have you arrested the Señor Sperati? What has he done? I cannot comprehend."

"Can't you? Well, it so happens, chevalier, that the Baron von Steinheid died something like two months ago, leaving the sum of sixty thousand pounds sterling to one Peter Janssen Pullaine and the heirs of his body, and that a certain Captain von Gossler, son of the baron's only sister, meant to make sure that there was no Peter Janssen Pullaine and no heirs of his body to inherit one farthing of it."

"Sir! Dear God, can this be true?"

"Perfectly true, chevalier. The late baron's solicitors have been advertising for some time for news regarding the whereabouts of Peter Janssen Pullaine, and if you had not so successfully hidden your real name under that of your professional one, no doubt

some of your colleagues would have put you in the way of finding it out long ago. The baron did not go back on his word and did not act ungratefully. His will, dated twenty-nine years ago, was never altered in a single particular. I rather suspect that that letter and that gift of money which came to you in the name of his steward, and was supposed to close the affair entirely, was the work of his nephew, the gentleman whose exit has just been made. A crafty individual that, chevalier, and he laid his plans cleverly and well. Who would be likely to connect him with the death of a beast-tamer in a circus, who had perished in what would appear an accident of his calling? Ah, yes, the lion's smile was a clever idea. He was a sharp rascal to think of it."

"Sir! You—you do not mean to tell me that he caused that? He never went near the beast—never—even once."

"Not necessary, chevalier. He kept near you and your children; that was all that he needed to do to carry out his plan. The lion was as much his victim as anybody else. What it did it could not help doing. The very simplicity of the plan was its passport to success. All that was required was the unsuspected sifting of snuff on the hair of the person whose head was to be put in the beast's mouth. The lion's smile was not, properly speaking, a smile at all, chevalier; it was the torture which came of snuff getting into its

nostrils, and when the beast made that uncanny noise and snapped its jaws together, it was simply the outcome of a sneeze. The thing would be farcical if it were not that tragedy hangs on the thread of it, and that a life, a useful human life, was destroyed by means of it. Yes, it was clever, it was diabolically clever; but you know what Bobby Burns says about the best-laid schemes of mice and men. There's always a Power higher up that works the ruin of them."

With that he walked by and, going to young Scarmelli, put out his hand.

"You're a good chap and you've got a good girl, so I expect you will be happy," he said; and then lowered his voice so that the rest might not reach the chevalier's ears. "You were wrong to suspect the little stepmother," he added. "She's true blue, Scarmelli. She was only playing up to those fellows because she was afraid the 'señor' would drop out and close the show if she didn't, and that she and her husband and the children would be thrown out of work. She loves her husband—that's certain—and she's a good little woman; and, Scarmelli?"

"Yes, Mr. Cleek?"

"There's nothing better than a good woman on this earth, my lad. Always remember that. I think you, too, have got one. I hope you have. I hope you will be happy. What's that? Owe me? Not a rap, my

boy. Or, if you feel that you must give me something, give me your prayers for equal luck when my time comes, and send me a slice of the wedding cake. The riddle's solved, old chap. Good-night!"

XVII.—The Roll-Call of The Reef *

By A. T. Quiller-Couch

"YES, sir," said my host, the quarryman, reaching down the relics from their hook in the wall over the chimney-piece; "they've hung there all my time, and most of my father's. The women won't touch 'em; they're afraid of the story. So here they'll dangle, and gather dust and smoke, till another tenant comes and tosses 'em out o' doors for rubbish. Whew! 'tis coarse weather, surely."

He went to the door, opened it, and stood studying the gale that beat upon his cottage-front, straight from the Manacle Reef. The rain drove past him

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into the kitchen, aslant like threads of gold silk in the shine of the wreck-wood fire. Meanwhile, by the same firelight, I examined the relics on my knee. The metal of each was tarnished out of knowledge. But the trumpet was evidently an old cavalry trumpet, and the threads of its parti-colored sling, though fretted and dusty, still hung together. Around the side-drum, beneath its cracked brown varnish, I could hardly trace a royal coat-of-arms and a legend running, "Per Mare Per Terram"—the motto of the marines. Its parchment, though black and scented with woodsmoke, was limp and mildewed; and I began to tighten up the straps—under which the drumsticks had been loosely thrust—with the idle purpose of seeing if some music might be got out of the old drum yet.

But as I turned it on my knee, I found the drum attached to the trumpet-sling by a curious barrel-shaped padlock, and paused to examine this. The body of the lock was composed of half a dozen brass rings, set accurately edge to edge; and, rubbing the brass with my thumb, I saw that each of the six had a series of letters engraved around it.

I knew the trick of it, I thought. Here was one of those word padlocks, once so common; only to be opened by getting the rings to spell a certain word, which the dealer confides to you.

My host shut and barred the door, and came back to the hearth.

"'Twas just such a wind—east by south—that

brought in what you've got between your hands. Back in the year 'nine, it was; my father has told me the tale a score o' times. You're twisting round the rings, I see. But you'll never guess the word. Parson Kendall, he made the word, and he locked down a couple o' ghosts in their graves with it; and when his time came he went to his own grave and took the word with him."

"Whose ghosts, Matthew?"

"You want the story, I see, sir. My father could tell it better than I can. He was a young man in the year 'nine, unmarried at the time, and living in this very cottage, just as I be. That's how he came to get mixed up with the tale."

He took a chair, lighted a short pipe, and went on, with his eyes fixed on the dancing violet flames:

"Yes, he'd ha' been about thirty year old in January, eighteen 'nine. The storm got up in the night o' the twenty-first o' that month. My father was dressed and out long before daylight; he never was one to bide in bed, let be that the gale by this time was pretty near lifting the thatch over his head. Besides which, he'd fenced a small 'taty-patch that winter, down by Lowland Point, and he wanted to see if it stood the night's work. He took the path across Gunner's Meadow—where they buried most of the bodies afterward. The wind was right in his teeth at the time, and once on the way (he's told me this often) a great strip of oarweed came flying through

the darkness and fetched him a slap on the cheek like a cold hand. He made shift pretty well till he got to Lowland, and then had to drop upon hands and knees and crawl, digging his fingers every now and then into a shingle to hold on, for he declared to me that the stones, some of them as big as a man's head, kept rolling and driving past till it seemed the whole foreshore was moving westward under him. The fence was gone, of course; not a stick left to show where it stood; so that, when first he came to the place, he thought he must have missed his bearings. My father, sir, was a very religious man; and if he reckoned the end of the world was at hand—there in the great wind and night, among the moving stones —you may believe he was certain of it when he heard a gun fired, and, with the same, saw a flame shoot up out of the darkness to windward, making a sudden fierce light in all the place about. All he could find to think or say was, 'The Second Coming! The Second Coming! The Bridegroom cometh, and the wicked He will toss like a ball into a large country'; and being already upon his knees, he just bowed his head and 'bided, saying this over and over.

"But by'm by, between two squalls, he made bold to lift his head and look, and then by the light—a bluish color 'twas—he saw all the coast clear away to Manacle Point, and off the Manacles in the thick of the weather, a sloop-of-war with topgallants housed, driving stern foremost toward the reef. It was she,

of course, that was burning the fire. My father could see the white streak and the ports of her quite plain as she rose to it, a little outside the breakers, and he guessed easy enough that her captain had just managed to wear ship and was trying to force her nose to the sea with the help of her small bower anchor and the scrap or two of canvas that hadn't yet been blown out of her. But while he looked, she fell off, giving her broadside to it, foot by foot, and drifting back on the breakers around Carn Du and the Varses. The rocks lie so thick thereabout that 'twas a toss up which she struck first; at any rate, my father couldn't tell at the time, for just then the flare died down and went out.

"Well, sir, he turned then in the dark and started back for Coverack to cry the dismal tidings—though well knowing ship and crew to be past any hope, and as he turned the wind lifted him and tossed him forward 'like a ball,' as he'd been saying, and homeward along the foreshore. As you know, 'tis ugly work, even by daylight, picking your way among the stones there, and my father was prettily knocked about at first in the dark. But by this 'twas nearer seven than six o'clock, and the day spreading. By the time he reached North Corner, a man could see to read print; hows'ever, he looked neither out to sea nor toward Coverack, but headed straight for the first cottage—the same that stands above North Corner to-day. A man named Billy Ede lived there then, and when my

father burst into the kitchen bawling, 'Wreck! wreck!' he saw Billy Ede's wife, Ann, standing there in her clogs with a shawl over her head, and her clothes wringing wet.

"'Save the chap,' says Billy Ede's wife, Ann. 'What d'ee mean by crying stale fish at that rate?'

"'But 'tis a wreck, I tell 'e.'

"'I'v a-zeed'n, too; and so has every one with an eye in his head.'

"And with that she pointed straight over my father's shoulder, and he turned; and there, close under Dolor Point, at the end of Coverack town he saw another wreck washing, and the point black with people, like emmets, running to and fro in the morning light. While he stood staring at her, he heard a trumpet sounded on board, the notes coming in little jerks, like a bird rising against the wind; but faintly, of course, because of the distance and the gale blowing—though this had dropped a little.

"'She's a transport,' said Billy Ede's wife, Ann, 'and full of horse-soldiers, fine long men. When she struck they must ha' pitched the horses over first to lighten the ship, for a score of dead horses had washed in afore I left, half an hour back. An' three or four soldiers, too—fine long corpses in white breeches and jackets of blue and gold. I held the lantern to one. Such a straight young man.'

"My father asked her about the trumpeting.

"'That's the queerest bit of all. She was burnin'

a light when me an' my man joined the crowd down there. All her masts had gone; whether they carried away, or were cut away to ease her, I don't rightly know. Her keelson was broke under her and her bottom sagged and stove, and she had just settled down like a setting hen—just the leastest list to starboard; but a man could stand there easy. They had rigged up ropes across her, from bulwark to bulwark, an' beside these the men were mustered, holding on like grim death whenever the sea made a clean breach over them, an' standing up like heroes as soon as it passed. The captain an' the officers were clinging to the rail of the quarter-deck, all in their golden uniforms, waiting for the end as if 'twas King George they expected. There was no way to help, for she lay right beyond cast of line, though our folk tried it fifty times. And beside them clung a trumpeter, a whacking big man, an' between the heavy seas he would lift his trumpet with one hand, and blow a call; and every time he blew the men gave a cheer. There (she says)—hark 'ee now—there he goes agen! But you won't hear no cheering any more, for few are left to cheer, and their voices weak. Bitter cold the wind is, and I reckon it numbs their grip o' the ropes, for they were dropping off fast with every sea when my man sent me home to get his breakfast. Another wreck, you say? Well, there's no hope for the tender dears if 'tis the Manacles. You'd better run down and help yonder; though 'tis little help any man

can give. Not one came in alive while I was there. The tide's flowing, an' she won't hold together another hour, they say.'

"Well, sure enough, the end was coming fast when my father got down to the Point. Six men had been cast up alive, or just breathing—a seaman and five troopers. The seaman was the only one that had breath to speak; and while they were carrying him into the town, the word went round that the ship's name was the 'Despatch,' transport, homeward bound from Corunna, with a detachment of the Seventh Hussars, that had been fighting out there with Sir John Moore. The seas had rolled her further over by this time, and given her decks a pretty sharp slope; but a dozen men still held on, seven by the ropes near the ship's waist, a couple near the break of the poop, and three on the quarter-deck. Of these three my father made out one to be the skipper; close to him clung an officer in full regimentals—his name, they heard after, was Captain Duncanfield; and last came the tall trumpeter; and if you'll believe me, the fellow was making shift there, at the very last, to blow 'God Save the King.' What's more, he got to 'Send us victorious,' before an extra big sea came bursting across and washed them off the deck—every man but one of the pair beneath the poop—and he dropped his hold before the next wave; being stunned, I reckon. The others went out of sight at once, but the trumpeter —being, as I said, a powerful man as well as a tough

swimmer—rose like a duck, rode out a couple of breakers, and came in on the crest of the third. The folks looked to see him broke like an egg at their very feet; but when the smother cleared, there he was, lying face downward on a ledge below them; and one of the men that happened to have a rope round him —I forget the fellow's name, if I ever heard it— jumped down and grabbed him by the ankle as he began to slip back. Before the next big sea, the pair were hauled high enough to be out of harm, and another heave brought them up to grass. Quick work, but master trumpeter wasn't quite dead; nothing worse than a cracked head and three staved ribs. In twenty minutes or so they had him in bed, with the doctor to tend him.

"Now was the time—nothing being left alive upon the transport—for my father to tell of the sloop he'd seen driving upon the Manacles. And when he got a hearing, though the most were set upon salvage, and believed a wreck in the hand, so to say, to be worth half a dozen they couldn't see, a good few volunteered to start off with him and have a look. They crossed Lowland Point; no ship to be seen on the Manacles nor anywhere upon the sea. One or two was for calling my father a liar. 'Wait till we come to Dean Point,' said he. Sure enough, on the far side of Dean Point they found the sloop's mainmast washing about with half a dozen men lashed to it, men in red jackets, every mother's son drowned and staring; and a

little further on, just under the Dean, three or four bodies cast up on the shore, one of them a small drummer-boy, side-drum and all; and nearby part of a ship's gig, with 'H.M.S. Primrose' cut on the sternboard. From this point on the shore was littered thick with wreckage and dead bodies—the most of them marines in uniform—and in Godrevy Cove, in particular, a heap of furniture from the captain's cabin, and among it a water-tight box, not much damaged, and full of papers, by which, when it came to be examined, next day, the wreck was easily made out to be the 'Primrose' of eighteen guns, outward bound from Portsmouth, with a fleet of transports for the Spanish war—thirty sail, I've heard, but I've never heard what became of them. Being handled by merchant skippers, no doubt they rode out the gale, and reached the Tagus safe and sound. Not but what the captain of the 'Primrose'—Mein was his name—did quite right to try and club-haul his vessel when he found himself under the land; only he never ought to have got there, if he took proper soundings. But it's easy talking.

"The 'Primrose,' sir, was a handsome vessel—for her size one of the handsomest in the King's service—and newly fitted out at Plymouth Dock. So the boys had brave pickings from her in the way of brass-work, ship's instruments, and the like, let alone some barrels of stores not much spoiled. They loaded themselves with as much as they could carry, and started for home, meaning to make a second journey before the

preventive men got wind of their doings, and came to spoil the fun. 'Hullo!' says my father, and dropped his gear, 'I do believe there's a leg moving!' and running fore, he stooped over the small drummer-boy that I told you about. The poor little chap was lying there, with his face a mass of bruises, and his eyes closed; but he had shifted one leg an inch or two, and was still breathing. So my father pulled out a knife, and cut him free from his drum—that was lashed on to him with a double turn of Manila rope—and took him up and carried him along here to this very room that we're sitting in. He lost a good deal by this; for when he went back to fetch the bundle he'd dropped, the preventive men had got hold of it, and were thick as thieves along the foreshore; so that 'twas only by paying one or two to look the other way that he picked up anything worth carrying off; which you'll allow to be hard, seeing that he was the first man to give news of the wreck.

"Well, the inquiry was held, of course, and my father gave evidence, and for the rest they had to trust to the sloop's papers, for not a soul was saved besides the drummer-boy, and he was raving in a fever, brought on by the cold and the fright. And the seaman and the five troopers gave evidence about the loss of the 'Despatch.' The tall trumpeter, too, whose ribs were healing, came forward and kissed the book; but somehow his head had been hurt in coming ashore, and he talked foolish-like, and 'twas easy seen he

would never be a proper man again. The others were taken up to Plymouth, and so went their ways; but the trumpeter stayed on in Coverack; and King George, finding he was fit for nothing, sent him down a trifle of a pension after a while—enough to keep him in board and lodging, with a bit of tobacco over.

"Now the first time that this man—William Tallifer he called himself—met with the drummer-boy, was about a fortnight after the little chap had bettered enough to be allowed a short walk out of doors, which he took, if you please, in full regimentals. There never was a soldier so proud of his dress. His own suit had shrunk a brave bit with the salt water; but into ordinary frock an' corduroy he declared he would not get, not if he had to go naked the rest of his life; so my father—being a good-natured man, and handy with the needle—turned to and repaired damages with a piece or two of scarlet cloth cut from the jacket of one of the drowned Marines. Well, the poor little chap chanced to be standing, in this rig out, down by the gate of Gunner's Meadow, where they had buried two score and over of his comrades. The morning was a fine one, early in March month; and along came the cracked trumpeter, likewise taking a stroll.

"'Hullo!' says he; 'good mornin'! And what might you be doin' here?'

"'I was a-wishin',' says the boy, 'I had a pair o' drumsticks. Our lads were buried yonder without so

much as a drum tapped or a musket fired; and that's not Christian burial for British soldiers.'

"'Phut!' says the trumpeter, and spat on the ground; 'a parcel of Marines!'

"The boy eyed him a second or so, and answered up: 'If I'd a tav of turf handy, I'd bung it at your mouth, you greasy cavalryman, and learn you to speak respectful of your betters. The Marines are the handiest body o' men in the service.'

"The trumpeter looked down on him from the height of six-foot-two, and asked: 'Did they die well?'

"'They died very well. There was a lot of running to and fro at first, and some of the men began to cry, and a few to strip off their clothes. But when the ship fell off for the last time, Captain Mein turned and said something to Major Griffiths, the commanding officer on board, and the Major called out to me to beat to quarters. It might have been for a wedding, he sang it out so cheerful. We'd had word already that 'twas to be parade order; and the men fell in as trim and decent as if they were going to church. One or two even tried to shave at the last moment. The Major wore his medals. One of the seamen, seeing I had work to keep the drum steady—the sling being a bit loose for me, and the wind what you remember—lashed it tight with a piece of rope; and that saved my life afterward, a drum being as good as cork until it's stove. I kept beating away until every man was

on deck—and then the Major formed them up and told them to die like British soldiers, and the chaplain was in the middle of a prayer when she struck. In ten minutes she was gone. That was how they died, cavalryman.'

"'And that was very well done, drummer of the Marines. What's your name?'

"'John Christian.'

"'Mine's William George Tallifer, trumpeter of the Seventh Light Dragoons—the Queen's Own. I played "God Save the King" while our men were drowning. Captain Duncanfield told me to sound a call or two, to put them in heart; but that matter of "God Save the King" was a notion of my own. I won't say anything to hurt the feelings of a Marine, even if he's not much over five-foot tall; but the Queen's Own Hussars is a tearin' fine regiment. As between horse and foot, 'tis a question o' which gets a chance. All the way from Sahagun to Corunna 'twas we that took and gave the knocks—at Mayorga and Rueda, and Bennyventy.'—The reason, sir, I can speak the names so pat, is that my father learnt them by heart afterward from the trumpeter, who was always talking about Mayorga and Rueda and Bennyventy.—'We made the rear-guard, after General Paget; and drove the French every time; and all the infantry did was to sit about in wine-shops till we whipped 'em out, an' steal an' straggle an' play the tom-fool in general. And when it came to a stand-

up fight at Corunna, 'twas we that had to stay seasick aboard the transports, an' watch the infantry in the thick o' the caper. Very well they behaved, too—'specially the Fourth Regiment, an' the Forty-Second Highlanders and the Dirty Half-Hundred. Oh, ay; they're decent regiments, all three. But the Queen's Own Hussars is a tearin' fine regiment. So you played on your drum when the ship was goin' down? Drummer John Christian, I'll have to get you a new pair of sticks.'

"The very next day the trumpeter marched into Helston, and got a carpenter there to turn him a pair of box-wood drumsticks for the boy. And this was the beginning of one of the most curious friendships you ever heard tell of. Nothing delighted the pair more than to borrow a boat off my father and pull out to the rocks where the 'Primrose' and the 'Despatch' had struck and sunk; and on still days 'twas pretty to hear them out there off the Manacles, the drummer playing his tattoo—for they always took their music with them—and the trumpeter practicing calls, and making his trumpet speak like an angel. But if the weather turned roughish, they'd be walking together and talking; leastwise the youngster listened while the other discoursed about Sir John's campaign in Spain and Portugal, telling how each little skirmish befell; and of Sir John himself, and General Baird, and General Paget, and Colonel Vivian, his own commanding officer, and what kind of men they were; and of the last

bloody stand-up at Corunna, and so forth, as if neither could have enough.

"But all this had to come to an end in the late summer, for the boy, John Christian, being now well and strong again, must go up to Plymouth to report himself. 'Twas his own wish (for I believe King George had forgotten all about him), but his friend wouldn't hold him back. As for the trumpeter, my father had made an arrangement to take him on as lodger, as soon as the boy left; and on the morning fixed for the start, he was up at the door here by five o'clock, with his trumpet slung by his side, and all the rest of his belongings in a small valise. A Monday morning it was, and after breakfast he had fixed to walk with the boy some way on the road toward Helston, where the coach started. My father left them at breakfast together, and went out to meat the pig, and do a few odd morning jobs of that sort. When he came back, the boy was still at table, and the trumpeter sat with the rings in his hands, hitched together just as they be at this moment.

" 'Look at this,' he says to my father, showing him the lock. 'I picked it up off a starving brass-worker in Lisbon, and it is not one of your common locks that one word of six letters will open at any time. There's janius in this lock; for you've only to make the rings spell any six-letter word you please and snap down the lock upon that, and never a soul can open it —not the maker, even—until somebody comes along

that knows the word you snapped it on. Now Johnny here's goin', and he leaves his drum behind him; for, though he can make pretty music on it, the parchment sags in wet weather, by reason of the sea-water gettin' at it; an' if he carries it to Plymouth, they'll only condemn it and give him another. And, as for me, I shan't have the heart to put lip to the trumpet any more when Johnny's gone. So we've chosen a word together, and locked 'em together upon that; and, by your leave, I'll hang 'em here together on the hook over your fireplace. Maybe Johnny'll come back; maybe not. Maybe, if he comes, I'll be dead an' gone, an' he'll take 'em apart an' try their music for old sake's sake. But if he never comes, nobody can separate 'em; for nobody beside knows the word. And if you marry and have sons, you can tell 'em that here are tied together the souls of Johnny Christian, drummer of the Marines, and William George Tallifer, once trumpeter of the Queen's Own Hussars. Amen.'

"With that he hung the two instruments 'pon the hook there; and the boy stood up and thanked my father and shook hands; and the pair went out of the door, toward Helston.

"Somewhere on the road they took leave of one another; but nobody saw the parting, nor heard what was said between them. About three in the afternoon the trumpeter came walking back over the hill; and by the time my father came home from the fishing, the cottage was tidied up, and the tea ready, and the whole

place shining like a new pin. From that time for five years he lodged here with my father, looking after the house and tilling the garden. And all the time he was steadily failing; the hurt in his head spreading, in a manner, to his limbs. My father watched the feebleness growing on him, but said nothing. And from first to last neither spake a word about the drummer, John Christian; nor did any letter reach them, nor word of his doings.

"The rest of the tale you're free to believe, sir, or not, as you please. It stands upon my father's words, and he always declared he was ready to kiss the Book upon it, before judge and jury. He said, too, that he never had the wit to make up such a yarn, and he defied any one to explain about the lock, in particular, by any other tale. But you shall judge for yourself.

"My father said that about three o'clock in the morning, April fourteenth, of the year 'fourteen, he and William Tallifer were sitting here, just as you and I, sir, are sitting now. My father had put on his clothes a few minutes before, and was mending his spiller by the light of the horn lantern, meaning to set off before daylight to haul the trammel. The trumpeter hadn't been to bed at all. Toward the last he mostly spent his nights (and his days, too) dozing in the elbow-chair where you sit at this minute. He was dozing then (my father said) with his chin dropped forward on his chest, when a knock sounded

upon the door, and the door opened, and in walked an upright young man in scarlet regimentals.

"He had grown a brave bit, and his face the color of wood-ashes; but it was the drummer, John Christian. Only his uniform was different from the one he used to wear, and the figures '38' shone in brass upon his collar.

"The drummer walked past my father as if he never saw him, and stood by the elbow-chair and said:

" 'Trumpeter, trumpeter, are you one with me?'

"And the trumpeter just lifted the lids of his eyes, and answered: 'How should I not be one with you, drummer Johnny—Johnny boy? If you come, I count; if you march, I mark time; until the discharge comes.'

" 'The discharge has come to-night,' said the drummer; 'and the word is Corunna no longer.' And stepping to the chimney-place, he unhooked the drum and trumpet, and began to twist the brass rings of the lock, spelling the word aloud, so—'C-O-R-U-N-A.' When he had fixed the last letter, the padlock opened in his hand.

" 'Did you know, trumpeter, that, when I came to Plymouth, they put me into a line regiment?'

" 'The 38th is a good regiment,' answered the old Hussar, still in his dull voice; 'I went back with them from Sahagun to Corunna. At Corunna they stood in General Fraser's division, on the right. They behaved well.'

" 'But I'd fain see the Marines again,' says the

drummer, handing him the trumpet; 'and you, you shall call once more for the Queen's Own. Matthew,' he says, suddenly, turning on my father—and when he turned, my father saw for the first time that his scarlet jacket had a round hole by the breast-bone, and that the blood was welling there—'Matthew, we shall want your boat.'

"Then my father rose on his legs like a man in a dream, while the two slung on, the one his drum, and t'other his trumpet. He took the lantern and went quaking before them down to the shore, and they breathed heavily behind him; and they stepped into his boat, and my father pushed off.

" 'Row you first for Dolor Point,' says the drummer. So my father rowed them past the white houses of Coverack to Dolor Point, and there, at a word, lay on his oars. And the trumpeter, William Tallifer, put his trumpet to his mouth and sounded the reveille. The music of it was like rivers running.

" 'They will follow,' said the drummer. 'Matthew, pull you now for the Manacles.'

"So my father pulled for the Manacles, and came to an easy close outside Carn Du. And the drummer took his sticks and beat a tattoo, there by the edge of the reef; and the music of it was like a rolling chariot.

" 'That will do,' says he, breaking off; 'they will follow. Pull now for the shore under Gunner's Meadow.'

"Then my father pulled for the shore and ran his

boat in under Gunner's Meadow. And they stepped out, all three, and walked up to the meadow. By the gate the drummer halted, and began his tattoo again, looking outward the darkness over the sea.

"And while the drum beat, and my father held his breath, there came up out of the sea and the darkness a troop of many men, horse and foot, and formed up among the graves; and others rose out of the graves and formed up—drowned Marines with bleached faces, and pale Hussars, riding their horses, all lean and shadowy. There was no clatter of hoofs or accouterments, my father said, but a soft sound all the while like the beating of a bird's wing; and a black shadow lay like a pool about the feet of all. The drummer stood upon a little knoll just inside the gate, and beside him the tall trumpeter, with hand on hip, watching them gather; and behind them both, my father, clinging to the gate. When no more came, the drummer stopped playing, and said, 'Call the roll.'

"Then the trumpeter stepped toward the end man of the rank and called, 'Troop Sergeant-Major Thomas Irons,' and the man answered in a thin voice, 'Here.'

" 'Troop Sergeant-Major Thomas Irons, how is it with you?'

"The man answered, 'How should it be with me? When I was young, I betrayed a girl; and when I was grown, I betrayed a friend, and for these I must pay. But I died as a man ought. God save the King!'

"The trumpeter called to the next man, 'Trooper Henry Buckingham,' and the next man answered, 'Here.'

" 'Trooper Henry Buckingham, how it is with you?'

" 'How should it be with me? I was a drunkard, and I stole, and in Lugo, in a wine-shop, I killed a man. But I died as a man should. God save the King!'

"So the trumpeter went down the line; and when he had finished, the drummer took it up, hailing the dead Marines in their order. Each man answered to his name, and each man ended with 'God save the King!' When all were hailed, the drummer stepped backward to his mound, and called:

" 'It is well. You are content, and we are content to join you. Wait, now, a little while.'

"With this he turned and ordered my father to pick up the lantern, and lead the way back. As my father picked it up, he heard the ranks of the dead men cheer and call, 'God save the King!' all together, and saw them waver and fade back into the dark, like a breath fading off a pane.

"But when they came back here to the kitchen, and my father set the lantern down, it seemed they'd both forgot about him. For the drummer turned in the lantern-light—and my father could see the blood still welling out of the hole in his breast—and took the trumpet-sling from around the other's neck, and locked drum and trumpet together again, choosing the letters

on the lock very carefully. While he did this, he said:

" 'The word is no more Corunna, but Bayonne. As you left out an "n" in Corunna, so must I leave out an "n" in Bayonne.' And before snapping the padlock, he spelt out the word slowly—'B-A-Y-O-N-E.' After that, he used no more speech; but turned and hung the two instruments back on the hook; and then took the trumpeter by the arm; and the pair walked out into the darkness, glancing neither to right nor left.

"My father was on the point of following, when he heard a sort of sigh behind him; and there, sitting in the elbow-chair, was the very trumpeter he had just seen walk out by the door! If my father's heart jumped before, you may believe it jumped quicker now. But after a bit, he went up to the man asleep in the chair and put a hand upon him. It was the trumpeter in flesh and blood that he touched; but though the flesh was warm, the trumpeter was dead.

"Well, sir, they buried him three days after; and at first my father was minded to say nothing about his dream (as he thought it). But the day after the funeral, he met Parson Kendall coming from Helston market: and the parson called out: 'Have 'ee heard the news the coach brought down this mornin'?' 'What news?' says my father. 'Why, that peace is agreed upon.' 'None too soon,' says my father. 'Not soon enough for our poor lads at Bayonne,' the parson answered. 'Bayonne!' cries my father, with a jump.

'Why, yes,' and the parson told him all about a great sally the French had made on the night of April 13th. 'Do you happen to know if the 38th Regiment was engaged?' my father asked. 'Come, now,' said Parson Kendall, 'I didn't know you was so well up in the campaign. But, as it happens, I do know that the 38th was engaged, for 'twas they that held a cottage and stopped the French advance.'

"Still my father held his tongue; and when, a week later, he walked into Helston and bought a *Mercury* off the Sherborne rider, and got the landlord of the 'Angel' to spell out the list of killed and wounded, sure enough, there among the killed was Drummer John Christian, of the 38th Foot.

"After this there was nothing for a religious man but to make a clean breast. So my father went up to Parson Kendall, and told the whole story. The parson listened, and put a question or two, and then asked:

" 'Have you tried to open the lock since that night?'

" 'I haven't dared to touch it,' says my father.

" 'Then come along and try.' When the parson came to the cottage here, he took the things off the hook and tried the lock. 'Did he say "Bayonne"? The word has seven letters.'

" 'Not if you spell it with one "n" as he did,' says my father.

"The parson spelt it out—'B-A-Y-O-N-E.' 'Whew!' says he, for the lock had fallen open in his hand.

"He stood considering it a moment, and then he says: 'I tell you what. I shouldn't blab this all round the parish, if I was you. You won't get no credit for truth-telling, and a miracle's wasted on a set of fools. But if you like, I'll shut down the lock again upon a holy word that no one but me shall know, and neither drummer nor trumpeter, dead or alive, shall frighten the secret out of me.'

"'I wish to heaven you would, parson,' said my father.

"The parson chose the holy word there and then, and shut the lock upon it, and hung the drum and trumpet back in their place. He is gone long since, taking the word with him. And till the lock is broken by force, nobody well ever separate those two."

XVIII.—The House and The Brain*

By Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton

A FRIEND of mine, who is a man of letters and a philosopher, said to me one day, as if between jest and earnest: "Fancy! since we last met, I have discovered a haunted house in the midst of London."

"Really haunted?—and by what—ghosts?"

"Well, I can't answer that question; all I know is this: six weeks ago my wife and I were in search of

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a furnished apartment. Passing a quiet street, we saw on the window of one of the houses a bill, 'Apartments, Furnished.' The situation suited us: we entered the house—liked the rooms—engaged them by the week—and left them the third day. No power on earth could have reconciled my wife to stay longer; and I don't wonder at it."

"What did you see?"

"It was not so much what we saw or heard that drove us away, as it was an undefinable terror which seized both of us whenever we passed by the door of a certain unfurnished room, in which we neither saw nor heard anything. Accordingly, on the fourth morning I summoned the woman who kept the house and attended on us, and told her that the rooms did not quite suit us, and we would not stay out our week. She said, dryly: 'I know why; you have stayed longer than any other lodger. Few ever stayed a second night; none before you a third. But I take it they have been very kind to you.'

" 'They—who?' I asked, affecting to smile.

" 'Why, they who haunt the house, whoever they are. I don't mind them; I remember them many years ago, when I lived in this house, not as a servant; but I know they will be the death of me some day. I don't care—I'm old and must die soon anyhow; and then I shall be with them, and in this house still.' The woman spoke with so dreary a calmness that really it was a sort of awe that prevented my conversing with

her further. I paid for my week, and too happy were my wife and I to get off so cheaply."

"You excite my curiosity," said I; "nothing I should like better than to sleep in a haunted house. Pray give me the address of the one which you left so ignominiously."

My friend gave me the address; and when we parted, I walked straight toward the house thus indicated.

It is situated on the north side of Oxford Street, in a dull but respectable thoroughfare. I found the house shut up—no bill at the window, and no response to my knock. As I was turning away, a beer-boy, collecting pewter pots at the neighboring areas, said to me, "Do you want any one at that house, sir?"

"Yes, I heard it was to be let."

"Let!—Mr. J. offered mother, who chars for him, a pound a week just to open and shut the windows, and she would not."

"Would not!—and why?"

"The house is haunted; and the old woman who kept it was found dead in her bed, with her eyes wide open. They say the devil strangled her."

"Pooh!—you speak of Mr. J——. Is he the owner of the house?"

"Yes."

"Where does he live?"

"In G—— Street, No. —."

I gave the pot-boy the gratuity earned by his liberal

information, and I was lucky enough to find Mr. J—— at home—an elderly man, with intelligent countenance and prepossessing manners.

I communicated my name and my business frankly. I said I heard the house was considered to be haunted —that I had a strong desire to examine a house with so equivocal a reputation—that I should be greatly obliged if he would allow me to hire it, though only for a night. I was willing to pay for that privilege whatever he might be inclined to ask. "Sir," said Mr. J——, with great courtesy, "the house is at your service, for as short or as long a time as you please. Rent is out of the question. The poor old woman who died in it three weeks ago was a pauper whom I took out of a workhouse, for in her childhood she had been known to some of my family, and had once been in such good circumstances that she had rented that house of my uncle. She was a woman of superior education and strong mind, and was the only person I could ever induce to remain in the house. Indeed, since her death, which was sudden, and the coroner's inquest which gave it a notoriety in the neighborhood, I have so despaired of finding any person to take charge of the house, much more a tenant, that I would willingly let it rent free for a year to any one who would pay its rates and taxes."

"How long is it since the house acquired this sinister character?"

"That I can scarcely tell you, but very many years

since. The old woman I spoke of said it was haunted when she rented it between thirty and forty years ago. I never had one lodger who stayed more than three days. I do not tell you their stories—to no two lodgers have there been exactly the same phenomena repeated. It is better that you should judge for yourself than enter the house with an imagination influenced by previous narratives; only be prepared to see and to hear something or other, and take whatever precautions you yourself please."

"Have you never had a curiosity yourself to pass a night in that house?"

"Yes. I passed not a night, but three hours in broad daylight alone in that house. My curiosity is not satisfied, but it is quenched. I have no desire to renew the experiment. You can not complain, you see, sir, that I am not sufficiently candid; and unless your interest be exceedingly eager and your nerves unusually strong, I honestly add, that I advise you *not* to pass a night in that house."

"My interest *is* exceedingly keen," said I, "and though only a coward will boast of his nerves in situations wholly unfamiliar to him, yet my nerves have been seasoned in such variety of danger that I have the right to rely on them—even in a haunted house."

Mr. J—— said very little more; he took the keys of his house out of his bureau, gave them to me—and, thanking him cordially for his frankness, and his urbane concession to my wish, I carried off my prize.

Impatient for the experiment, as soon as I reached home, I summoned my confidential servant—a young man of gay spirits, fearless temper, and as free from superstitious prejudice as any one I could think of.

"F——," said I, "you remember in Germany how disappointed we were at not finding a ghost in that old castle, which was said to be haunted by a headless apparition? Well, I have heard of a house in London which, I have reason to hope, is decidedly haunted. I mean to sleep there to-night. From what I hear, there is no doubt that something will allow itself to be seen or to be heard—something, perhaps, excessively horrible. Do you think, if I take you with me, I may rely on your presence of mind, whatever may happen?"

"Oh, sir! pray trust me," answered F——, grinning with delight.

"Very well; then here are the keys of the house—this is the address. Go now—select for me any bedroom you please; and since the house has not been inhabited for weeks make up a good fire—air the bed well—see, of course, that there are candles as well as fuel. Take with you my revolver and my dagger—so much for my weapons—arm yourself equally well; and if we are not a match for a dozen ghosts we shall be but a sorry couple of Englishmen."

I was engaged for the rest of the day on business so urgent that I had not leisure to think much on the noctural adventure to which I had plighted my honor. I dined alone, and very late, and while dining, read,

as is my habit. I selected one of the volumes of Macaulay's essays. I thought to myself that I would take the book with me; there was so much of healthfulness in the style and practical life in the subjects, that it would serve as an antidote against the influence of superstitious fancy.

Accordingly, about half-past nine, I put the book into my pocket and strolled leisurely toward the haunted house. I took with me a favorite dog—an exceedingly sharp, bold, and vigilant bull-terrier—a dog fond of prowling about strange ghostly corners and passages at night in search of rats—a dog of dogs for a ghost.

It was a summer night, but chilly, the sky somewhat gloomy and overcast. Still there was a moon—faint and sickly, but still a moon—and, if the clouds permitted, after midnight it would be brighter.

I reached the house, knocked, and my servant opened the door with a cheerful smile.

"All right, sir, and very comfortable."

"Oh!" said I, rather disappointed; "have you not seen nor heard anything remarkable?"

"Well, sir, I must own I have heard something queer."

"What?—what?"

"The sound of feet pattering behind me; and once or twice small noises like whispers close at my ear—nothing more."

"You are not at all frightened?"

"I! not a bit of it, sir;" and the man's bold look reassured me on one point—viz.: that happen what might, he would not desert me.

We were in the hall, the street door closed, and my attention was now drawn to my dog. He had at first run in eagerly enough but had sneaked back to the door, and was scratching and whining to get out. After patting him on the head, and encouraging him gently, the dog seemed to reconcile himself to the situation and followed me and F—— through the house, but keeping close to my heels instead of hurrying inquisitively in advance, which was his usual and normal habit in all strange places. We first visited the subterranean apartments, the kitchen, and other offices, and especially the cellars, in which last there were two or three bottles of wine still left in a bin, covered with cobwebs, and evidently, by their appearance, undisturbed for many years. It was clear that the ghosts were not wine-bibbers. For the rest, we discovered nothing of interest. There was a gloomy little backyard, with very high walls. The stones of this yard were very damp; and what with the damp, and what with the dust and smoke-grime on the pavement, our feet left a slight impression where we passed. And now appeared the first strange phenomenon witnessed by myself in this strange abode. I saw, just before me, the print of a foot suddenly form itself, as it were. I stopped, caught hold of my servant, and pointed to it. In advance of that footprint as

suddenly dropped another. We both saw it. I advanced quickly to the place; the footprint kept advancing before me, a small footprint—the foot of a child; the impression was too faint thoroughly to distinguish the shape, but it seemed to us both that it was the print of a naked foot.

This phenomenon ceased when we arrived at the opposite wall, nor did it repeat itself on returning. We remounted the stairs, and entered the rooms on the ground floor, a dining-parlor, a small back-parlor, and a still smaller third room that had been probably appropriated to a footman—all still as death. We then visited the drawing-rooms, which seemed fresh and new. In the front room I seated myself in an armchair. F—— placed on the table the candlestick with which he had lighted us. I told him to shut the door. As he turned to do so, a chair opposite to me moved from the wall quickly and noiselessly, and dropped itself about a yard from my own, immediately fronting it.

"Why, this is better than the turning-tables," said I, with a half-laugh; and as I laughed, my dog put back his head and howled.

F——, coming back, had not observed the movement of the chair. He employed himself now in stilling the dog. I continued to gaze on the chair, and fancied I saw on it a pale blue misty outline of a human figure, but an outline so indistinct that I could only distrust my own vision. The dog was now quiet.

"Put back that chair opposite to me," said I to F——; "put it back to the wall."

F—— obeyed. "Was that you, sir?" said he turning abruptly.

"I!—what?"

"Why, something struck me. I felt it sharply on the shoulder—just here."

"No," said I. "But we have jugglers present, and though we may not discover their tricks, we shall catch them before they frighten us."

We did not stay long in the drawing-rooms—in fact, they felt so damp and so chilly that I was glad to get to the fire upstairs. We locked the doors of the drawing-rooms—a precaution which, I should observe, we had taken with all the rooms we had searched below. The bedroom my servant had selected for me was the best on the floor—a large one, with two windows fronting the street. The four-posted bed, which took up no inconsiderable space, was opposite to the fire, which burnt clear and bright; a door in the wall to the left, between the bed and the window, communicated with the room which my servant appropriated to himself. This last was a small room with a sofa-bed, and had no communication with the landing-place—no other door but that which conducted to the bedroom I was to occupy. On either side of my fireplace was a cupboard, without locks, flush with the wall, and covered with the same dull-brown paper. We examined these cupboards—only hooks to suspend fe-

male dresses—nothing else; we sounded the walls—evidently solid—the outer walls of the building. Having finished the survey of these apartments, warmed myself a few moments, and lighted my cigar, I then, still accompanied by F——, went forth to complete my reconnoiter. In the landing-place there was another door! it was closed firmly. "Sir," said my servant, in surprise, "I unlocked this door with all the others when I first came; it can not have got locked from the inside, for——"

Before he had finished his sentence, the door, which neither of us then was touching, opened quietly of itself. We looked at each other a single instant. The same thought seized both—some human agency might be detected here. I rushed in first—my servant followed. A small blank dreary room without furniture—a few empty boxes and hampers in a corner—a small window—the shutters closed—not even a fireplace—no other door but that by which we had entered—no carpet on the floor, and the floor seemed very old, uneven, worm-eaten, mended here and there, as was shown by the whiter patches on the wood; but no living being, and no visible place in which a living being could have hidden. As we stood gazing around, the door by which we had entered closed as quietly as it had before opened; we were imprisoned.

For the first time I felt a creep of undefinable horror. Not so my servant. "Why, they don't think to

trap us, sir; I could break that trumpery door with a kick of my foot."

"Try first if it will open to your hand," said I, shaking off the vague apprehension that had seized me, "while I unclose the shutters and see what is without."

I unbarred the shutters—the window looked on the little back-yard I have before described; there was no ledge without—nothing to break the sheer descent of the wall. No man getting out of that window would have found any footing till he had fallen on the stones below.

F——, meanwhile, was vainly attempting to open the door. He now turned round to me and asked my permission to use force. And I should here state, in justice to the servant, that far from evincing any superstitious terrors, his nerve, composure, and even gayety amid circumstances so extraordinary, compelled my admiration, and made me congratulate myself on having secured a companion in every way fitted to the occasion. I willingly gave him the permission he required. But though he was a remarkably strong man, his force was as idle as his milder efforts; the door did not even shake to his stoutest kick. Breathless and panting, he desisted. I then tried the door myself, equally in vain. As I ceased from the effort, again that creep of horror came over me; but this time it was more cold and stubborn. I felt as if some strange and ghastly exhalation were rising up from the chinks of that rugged floor, and filling the atmos-

phere with a venomous influence hostile to human life. The door now very slowly and quietly opened as of its own accord. We precipitated ourselves into the landing-place. We both saw a large pale light—as large as the human figure, but shapeless and unsubstantial—move before us, and ascend the stairs that led from the landing into the attic. I followed the light, and my servant followed me. It entered to the right of the landing, a small garret, of which the door stood open. I entered in the same instant. The light then collapsed into a small globule, exceedingly brilliant and vivid; rested a moment on a bed in the corner, quivered, and vanished. We approached the bed and examined it—a half-tester, such as is commonly found in attics devoted to servants. On the drawers that stood near it we perceived an old faded silk handkerchief, with the needle still left in a rent half repaired. The kerchief was covered with dust; probably it had belonged to the old woman who had last died in that house, and this might have been her sleeping-room. I had sufficient curiosity to open the drawers: there were a few odds and ends of female dress, and two letters tied round with a narrow ribbon of faded yellow. I took the liberty to possess myself of the letters. We found nothing else in the room worth noticing—nor did the light reappear; but we distinctly heard, as we turned to go, a pattering footfall on the floor—just before us. We went through the other attics (in all four), the footfall still preceding us.

Nothing to be seen—nothing but the footfall heard. I had the letters in my hand: just as I was descending the stairs I distinctly felt my wrist seized, and a faint soft effort made to draw the letters from my clasp. I only held them the more tightly, and the effort ceased.

We regained the bed-chamber appropriated to myself, and I then remarked that my dog had not followed us when we had left it. He was thrusting himself close to the fire and trembling. I was impatient to examine the letters; and while I read them, my servant opened a little box in which he had deposited the weapons I had ordered him to bring; took them out, placed them on a table close at my bed-head, and he occupied himself in soothing the dog, who, however, seemed to heed him very little.

The letters were short—they were dated; the dates exactly thirty-five years ago. They were evidently from a lover to his mistress, or a husband to some young wife. Not only the terms of expression, but a distinct reference to a former voyage, indicated the writer to have been a seafarer. The spelling and handwriting were those of a man imperfectly educated, but still the language itself was forcible. In the expressions of endearment there was a kind of rough wild love; but here and there were dark unintelligible hints at some secret not of love—some secret that seemed of crime. "We ought to love each other," was one of the sentences I remember, "for how

every one else would execrate us if all was known." Again: "Don't let any one be in the same room with you at night—you talk in your sleep." And again: "What's done can't be undone; and I tell you there's nothing against us unless the dead could come to life." Here there was underlined in a better handwriting (a female's): "They do!" At the end of the letter latest in date the same female hand had written these words: "Lost at sea the 4th of June, the same day as——"

I put down the letters, and began to muse over their contents.

Fearing, however, that the train of thought into which I fell might unsteady my nerves, I fully determined to keep my mind in a fit state to cope with whatever of marvelous the advancing night might bring forth. I roused myself—laid the letters on the table—stirred up the fire, which was still bright and cheering, and opened my volume of Macaulay. I read quietly enough till about half-past eleven. I then threw myself dressed upon the bed, and told my servant he might retire to his own room, but must keep himself awake. I bade him leave open the door between the two rooms. Thus alone, I kept two candles burning on the table by my bed-head. I placed my watch beside the weapons, and calmly resumed my Macaulay. Opposite to me the fire burned clear; and on the hearth-rug, seemingly asleep, lay the dog. In about twenty minutes I felt an exceedingly cold air

pass by my cheek, like a sudden draft. I fancied the door to my right, communicating with the landing-place, must have got open, but no—it was closed. I then turned my glance to my left, and saw the flame of the candles violently swayed as by a wind. At the same moment the watch beside the revolver softly slid from the table—softly, softly—no visible hand—it was gone. I sprang up, seizing the revolver with one hand, the dagger with the other: I was not willing that my weapons should share the fate of the watch. Thus armed, I looked round the floor—no sign of the watch. Three slow, loud, distinct knocks were now heard at the bed-head; my servant called out: "Is that you, sir?"

"No; be on your guard."

The dog now roused himself and sat on his haunches, his ears moving quickly backward and forward. He kept his eyes fixed on me with a look so strange that he concentrated all my attention on himself. Slowly, he rose up, all his hair bristling, and stood perfectly rigid, and with the same wild stare. I had not time, however, to examine the dog. Presently my servant emerged from his room; and if ever I saw horror in the human face, it was then. I should not have recognized him had we met in the street, so altered was every lineament. He passed by me quickly, saying in a whisper that seemed scarcely to come from his lips: "Run—run! it is after me!" He gained the door to the landing, pulled it open, and rushed forth.

I followed him into the landing involuntarily, calling him to stop; but, without heeding me, he bounded down the stairs, clinging to the balusters, and taking several steps at a time. I heard, where I stood, the street-door open—heard it again clap to. I was left alone in the haunted house.

It was but for a moment that I remained undecided whether or not to follow my servant; pride and curiosity alike forbade so dastardly a flight. I re-entered my room, closing the door after me, and proceeded cautiously into the interior chamber. I encountered nothing to justify my servant's terror. I again carefully examined the walls, to see if there were any concealed door. I could find no trace of one—not even a seam in the dull-brown paper with which the room was hung. How, then, had the Thing, whatever it was, which had so scared him, obtained ingress except through my own chamber?

I returned to my room, shut and locked the door that opened upon the interior one, and stood on the hearth, expectant and prepared. I now perceived that the dog had slunk into an angle of the wall, and was pressing himself close against it, as if literally striving to force his way into it. I approached the animal and spoke to it; the poor brute was evidently beside itself with terror. It showed all its teeth, the slaver dropping from its jaws, and would certainly have bitten me if I had touched it. It did not seem to recognize me. Whoever has seen at the Zoological

Gardens a rabbit, fascinated by a serpent, cowering in a corner, may form some idea of the anguish which the dog exhibited. Finding all efforts to soothe the animal in vain, and fearing that his bite might be as venomous in that state as in the madness of hydrophobia, I left him alone, placed my weapons on the table beside the fire, seated myself, and recommenced my Macaulay.

I now became aware that something interposed between the page and the light—the page was overshadowed: I looked up, and I saw what I shall find it very difficult, perhaps impossible, to describe.

It was a darkness shaping itself forth from the air in very undefined outline. I can not say it was of a human form, and yet it had more resemblance to a human form, or rather shadow, than to anything else. As it stood, wholly apart and distinct from the air and the light around it, its dimensions seemed gigantic, the summit nearly touching the ceiling. While I gazed, a feeling of intense cold seized me. An iceberg before me could not more have chilled me; nor could the cold of an iceberg have been more purely physical. I feel convinced that it was not the cold caused by fear. As I continued to gaze, I thought—but this I can not say with precision—that I distinguished two eyes looking down on me from the height. One moment I fancied that I distinguished them clearly, the next they seemed gone; but still two rays of a pale-blue light frequently shot through the darkness, as from the

height on which I half-believed, half-doubted, that I had encountered the eyes.

I strove to speak—my voice utterly failed me; I could only think to myself: "Is this fear? it is *not* fear!" I strove to rise—in vain; I felt as if weighed down by an irresistible force. Indeed, my impression was that of an immense and overwhelming power opposed to my volition—that sense of utter inadequacy to cope with a force beyond man's, which one may feel *physically* in a storm at sea, in a conflagration, or when confronting some terrible wild beast, or rather, perhaps, the shark of the ocean, I felt *morally*. Opposed to my will was another will, as far superior to its strength as storm, fire, and shark are superior in material force to the force of man.

And now, as this impression grew on me—now came, at last, horror—horror to a degree that no words can convey. Still I retained pride, if not courage; and in my own mind I said: "This is horror, but it is not fear; unless I fear I can not be harmed; my reason rejects this thing; it is an illusion—I do not fear." With a violent effort I succeded at last in stretching out my hand toward the weapon on the table: as I did so, on the arm and shoulder I received a strange shock, and my arm fell to my side powerless. And now, to add to my horror, the light began slowly to wane from the candles—they were not, as it were, extinguished, but their flame seemed very gradually withdrawn; it was the same with the fire—the light

was extracted from the fuel; in a few minutes the room was in utter darkness. The dread that came over me, to be thus in the dark with that dark Thing, whose power was so intensely felt, brought a reaction of nerve. In fact, terror had reached that climax, that either my senses must have deserted me, or I must have burst through the spell. I did burst through it. I found voice, though the voice was a shriek. I remember that I broke forth with words like these: "I do not fear, my soul does not fear"; and at the same time I found strength to rise. Still in that profound gloom I rushed to one of the windows—tore aside the curtain—flung open the shutters; my first thought was—Light. And when I saw the moon high, clear, and calm, I felt a joy that almost compensated for the previous terror. There was the moon, there was also the light from the gas-lamps in the deserted slumberous street. I turned to look back into the room; the moon penetrated its shadow very palely and partially—but still there was light. The dark Thing, whatever it might be, was gone—except that I could yet see a dim shadow, which seemed the shadow of that shade, against the opposite wall.

My eye now rested on the table, and from under the table (which was without cloth or cover—an old mahogany round table) there rose a hand, visible as far as the wrist. It was a hand, seemingly, as much of flesh and blood as my own, but the hand of an aged person—lean, wrinkled, small, too—a woman's

hand. That hand very softly closed on the two letters that lay on the table; the hand and letters both vanished. Then there came the same three loud measured knocks I had heard at the bed-head before this extraordinary drama had commenced.

As those sounds slowly ceased, I felt the whole room vibrate sensibly; and at the far end there rose, as from the floor, sparks or globules like bubbles of light, many colored—green, yellow, fire-red, azure. Up and down, to and fro, hither, thither, as tiny Will-o'-the-wisps, the sparks moved, slow or swift, each at its own caprice. A chair (as in the drawing-room below) was now advanced from the wall without apparent agency, and placed at the opposite side of the table. Suddenly, as forth from the chair, there grew a shape—a woman's shape. It was distinct as a shape of life—ghastly as a shape of death. The face was that of youth, with a strange mournful beauty; the throat and shoulders were bare, the rest of the form in a loose robe of cloudy white. It began sleeking its long yellow hair, which fell over its shoulders; its eyes were not turned toward me, but to the door; it seemed listening, watching, waiting. The shadow of the shade in the background grew darker; and again I thought I beheld the eyes gleaming out from the summit of the shadow—eyes fixed upon that shape.

As if from the door, though it did not open, there grew out another shape, equally distinct, equally ghastly—a man's shape—a young man's. It was in

the dress of the last century, or rather in a likeness of such dress (for both the male shape and the female, though defined, were evidently unsubstantial, impalpable—simulacra—phantasms); and there was someing incongruous, grotesque, yet fearful, in the contrast between the elaborate finery, the courtly precision of that old-fashioned garb, with its ruffles and lace and buckles, and the corpse-like stillness of the flitting wearer. Just as the male shape approached the female, the dark Shadow started from the wall, all three for a moment wrapped in darkness. When the pale light returned, the two phantoms were as if in the grasp of the Shadow that towered between them; and there was a blood-stain on the breast of the female; and the phantom male was leaning on its phantom sword, and blood seemed trickling fast from the ruffles, from the lace; and the darkness of the intermediate Shadow swallowed them up—they were gone. And again the bubbles of light shot, and sailed, and undulated, growing thicker and thicker and more wildly confused in their movements.

The closet door to the right of the fireplace now opened, and from the aperture there came forth the form of an aged woman. In her hand she held letters —the very letters over which I had seen the Hand close; and behind her I heard a footstep. She turned round as if to listen, and then she opened the letters and seemed to read; and over her shoulder I saw a livid face, the face as of a man long drowned—bloated,

bleached—seaweed tangled in his dripping hair; and at her feet lay a form as of a corpse, and beside the corpse there cowered a child, a miserable squalid child, with famine in its cheeks and fear in its eyes. And as I looked in the old woman's face, the wrinkles and lines vanished, and it became a face of youth—hard-eyed, stony, but still youth; and the Shadow darted forth, and darkened over those phantoms as it had darkened over the last.

Nothing now was left but the Shadow, and on that my eyes were intently fixed, till again eyes grew out of the Shadow—malignant, serpent eyes. And the bubbles of light again rose and fell, and in their disordered, irregular, turbulent maze, mingled with the wan moonlight. And now from these globules themselves, as from the shell of an egg, monstrous things burst out; the air grew filled with them; larvæ so bloodless and so hideous that I can in no way describe them except to remind the reader of the swarming life which the solar microscope brings before his eyes in a drop of water—things transparent, supple, agile, chasing each other, devouring each other—forms like naught ever beheld by the naked eye. As the shapes were without symmetry, so their movements were without order. In their very vagrancies there was no sport; they came round me and round, thicker and faster and swifter, swarming over my head, crawling over my right arm, which was outstretched in involuntary command against all evil beings. Sometimes

I felt myself touched, but not by them; invisible hands touched me. Once I felt the clutch as of cold soft fingers at my throat. I was still equally conscious that if I gave way to fear I should be in bodily peril; and I concentrated all my faculties in the single focus of resisting, stubborn will. And I turned my sight from the Shadow—above all, from those strange serpent eyes—eyes that had now become distinctly visible. For there, though in naught else around me, I was aware that there was a WILL, and a will of intense, creative, working evil, which might crush down my own.

The pale atmosphere in the room began now to redden as if in the air of some near conflagration. The larvæ grew lurid as things that live in fire. Again the moon vibrated; again were heard the three measured knocks; and again all things were swallowed up in the darkness of the dark Shadow, as if out of that darkness all had come, into that darkness all returned.

As the gloom receded, the Shadow was wholly gone. Slowly, as it had been withdrawn, the flame grew again into the candles on the table, again into the fuel in the grate. The whole room came once more calmly, healthfully into sight.

The two doors were still closed, the door communicating with the servant's room still locked. In the corner of the wall, into which he had so convulsively niched himself, lay the dog. I called to him—no

movement; I approached—the animal was dead; his eyes protruded; his tongue out of his mouth; the froth gathered round his jaws. I took him in my arms; I brought him to the fire; I felt acute grief for the loss of my poor favorite—acute self-reproach; I accused myself of his death; I imagined he had died of fright. But what was my surprise on finding that his neck was actually broken. Had this been done in the dark?—must it not have been by a hand human as mine?—must there not have been a human agency all the while in that room? Good cause to suspect it. I can not tell. I can not do more than state the fact fairly; the reader may draw his own inference.

Another surprising circumstance—my watch was restored to the table from which it had been so mysteriously withdrawn; but it had stopped at the very moment it was so withdrawn; nor, despite all the skill of the watchmaker, has it ever gone since—that is, it will go in a strange erratic way for a few hours, and then come to a dead stop—it is worthless.

Nothing more chanced for the rest of the night. Nor, indeed, had I long to wait before the dawn broke. Nor till it was broad daylight did I quit the haunted house. Before I did so, I revisited the little blind room in which my servant and myself had been for a time imprisoned. I had a strong impression—for which I could not account—that from that room had originated the mechanism of the phenomena—if I may use the term—which had been experienced in my cham-

ber. And though I entered it now in the clear day, with the sun peering through the filmy window, I still felt, as I stood on its floors, the creep of the horror which I had first there experienced the night before, and which had been so aggravated by what had passed in my own chamber. I could not, indeed, bear to stay more than half a minute within those walls. I descended the stairs, and again I heard the footfall before me; and when I opened the street door, I thought I could distinguish a very low laugh. I gained my own house, expecting to find my runaway servant there. But he had not presented himself, nor did I hear more of him for three days, when I received a letter from him, dated from Liverpool to this effect:

"Honored Sir:—I humbly entreat your pardon, though I can scarcely hope that you will think that I deserve it, unless—which Heaven forbid!—you saw what I did. I feel that it will be years before I can recover myself; and as to being fit for service, it is out of the question. I am therefore going to my brother-in-law at Melbourne. The ship sails tomorrow. Perhaps the long voyage may set me up. I do nothing now but start and tremble, and fancy It is behind me. I humbly beg you, honored sir, to order my clothes, and whatever wages are due to me, to be sent to my mother's, at Walworth—John knows her address."

The letter ended with additional apologies, somewhat incoherent, and explanatory details as to effects that had been under the writer's charge.

This flight may perhaps warrant a suspicion that the man wished to go to Australia, and had been some-

how or other fraudulently mixed up with the events of the night. I say nothing in refutation of that conjecture; rather, I suggest it as one that would seem to many persons the most probable solution of improbable occurrences. My belief in my own theory remained unshaken. I returned in the evening to the house, to bring away in a hack cab the things I had left there, with my poor dog's body. In this task I was not disturbed, nor did any incident worth note befall me, except that still, on ascending and descending the stairs, I heard the same footfall in advance. On leaving the house, I went to Mr. J——'s. He was at home. I returned him the keys, told him that my curiosity was sufficiently gratified, and was about to relate quickly what had passed, when he stopped me, and said, though with much politeness, that he had no longer any interest in a mystery which none had ever solved.

I determined at least to tell him of the two letters I had read, as well as of the extraordinary manner in which they had disappeared, and I then inquired if he thought they had been addressed to the woman who had died in the house, and if there were anything in her early history which could possibly confirm the dark suspicions to which the letters gave rise. Mr. J—— seemed startled, and, after musing a few moments, answered: "I am but little acquainted with the woman's earlier history, except, as I before told you, that her family were known to mine. But you

revive some vague reminiscences to her prejudice. I will make inquiries, and inform you of their result. Still, even if we could admit the popular superstition that a person who had been either the perpetrator or the victim of dark crimes in life could revisit, as a restless spirit, the scene in which those crimes had been committed, I should observe that the house was infested by strange sights and sounds before the old woman died—you smile—what would you say?"

"I would say this, that I am convinced, if we could get to the bottom of these mysteries, we should find a living human agency."

"What! you believe it is all an imposture? for what object?"

"Not an imposture in the ordinary sense of the word. If suddenly I were to sink into a deep sleep, from which you could not awake me, but in that sleep could answer questions with an accuracy which I could not pretend to when awake—tell you what money you had in your pocket—nay, describe your very thoughts —it is not necessarily an imposture, any more than it is necessarily supernatural. I should be, unconsciously to myself, under a mesmeric influence, conveyed to me from a distance by a human being who had acquired power over me by previous *rapport.*"

"But if a mesmerizer could so affect another living being, can you suppose that a mesmerizer could also affect inanimate objects; move chairs—open and shut doors?"

"Or impress our senses with the belief in such effects—we never having been *en rapport* with the person acting on us? No. What is commonly called mesmerism could not do this; but there may be a power akin to mesmerism and superior to it—the power that in the old days was called Magic. That such a power may extend to all inanimate objects of matter, I do not say; but if so, it would not be against nature—it would only be a rare power in nature which might be given to constitutions with certain peculiarities, and cultivated by practice to an extraordinary degree.

"That such a power might extend over the dead—that is, over certain thoughts and memories that the dead may still retain—and compel, not that which ought properly to be called the Soul, and which is far beyond human reach, but rather a phantom of what has been most earth-stained on earth to make itself apparent to our senses—is a very ancient though obsolete theory, upon which I will hazard no opinion. But I do not conceive the power to be supernatural. Let me illustrate what I mean from an experiment which Paracelsus describes as not difficult, and which the author of the 'Curiosities of Literature' cites as credible: A flower perishes; you burn it. Whatever were the elements of that flower while it lived are gone, dispersed, you know not whither; you can never discover nor re-collect them. But you can, by chemistry, out of the burned dust of that flower, raise a

spectrum of the flower, just as it seemed in life. It may be the same with the human being. The soul has as much escaped you as the essence or elements of the flower. Still you may make a spectrum of it. And this phantom, though in the popular superstition it is held to be the soul of the departed, must not be confounded with the true soul; it is but the *eidolon* of the dead form. Hence, like the best attested stories of ghosts or spirits, the thing that most strikes us is the absence of what we hold to be the soul; that is, of superior emancipated intelligence. These apparitions come for little or no object—they seldom speak when they do come; if they speak, they utter no ideas above those of an ordinary person on earth. Wonderful, therefore, as such phenomena may be (granting them to be truthful), I see much that philosophy may question, nothing that it is incumbent on philosophy to deny—viz., nothing supernatural. They are but ideas conveyed somehow or other (we have not yet discovered the means) from one mortal brain to another. Whether, in so doing, tables walk by their own accord, or fiend-like shapes appear in a magic circle, or bodyless hands rise and remove material objects, or a Thing of Darkness, such as presented itself to me, freeze our blood—still am I persuaded that these are but agencies conveyed, as by electric wires, to my own brain from the brain of another. In some constitutions there is a natural chemistry, and those constitutions may produce chemic wonders—in others

a natural fluid, call it electricity, and these may produce electric wonders. But the wonders differ from Natural Science in this—they are alike objectless, purposeless, puerile, frivolous. They lead on to no grand results; and therefore the world does not heed, and true sages have not cultivated them. But sure I am, that of all I saw or heard, a man, human as myself, was the remote originator; and I believe unconsciously to himself as to the exact effects produced, for this reason: no two persons, you say, have ever experienced exactly the same thing. Well, observe, no two persons ever experience exactly the same dream. If this were an ordinary imposture, the machinery would be arranged for results that would but little vary; if it were a supernatural agency permitted by the Almighty, it would surely be for some definite end. These phenomena belong to neither class; my persuasion is that they originated in some brain now far distant; that that brain had no distinct volition in anything that occurred; that what does occur reflects but its devious, motley, ever-shifting, half-formed thoughts; in short, that it has been but the dreams of such a brain put in action and invested with a semi-substance. That this brain is of immense power, that it can set matter into movement, that it is malignant and destructive, I believe; some material force must have killed my dog; the same force might, for aught I know, have sufficed to kill myself, had I been as subjugated by terror as

the dog—had my intellect or my spirit given me no countervailing resistance in my will."

"It killed your dog! that is fearful! indeed it is strange that no animal can be induced to stay in that house; not even a cat. Rats and mice are never found in it."

"The instincts of the brute creation detect influences deadly to their existence. Man's reason has a sense less subtle, because it has a resisting power more supreme. But enough; do you comprehend my theory?"

"Yes, though imperfectly—and I accept any crotchet (pardon the word), however odd, rather than embrace at once the notion of ghosts and hobgoblins we imbibed in our nurseries. Still, to my unfortunate house the evil is the same. What on earth can I do with the house?"

"I will tell you what I would do. I am convinced from my own internal feelings that the small unfurnished room at right angles to the door of the bedroom which I occupied forms a starting-point or receptacle for the influences which haunt the house; and I strongly advise you to have the walls opened, the floor removed—nay, the whole room pulled down. I observe that it is detached from the body of the house, built over the small back-yard, and could be removed without injury to the rest of the building."

"And you think, if I did that——"

"You would cut off the telegraph wires. Try it. I am so persuaded that I am right that I will pay

half the expense if you will allow me to direct the operations."

"Nay, I am well able to afford the cost; for the rest, allow me to write to you."

About ten days after I received a letter from Mr. J——, telling me that he had visited the house since I had seen him; that he had found the two letters I had described, replaced in the drawer from which I had taken them; that he had read them with misgivings like my own; that he had instituted a cautious inquiry about the woman to whom I rightly conjectured they had been written. It seemed that thirty-six years ago (a year before the date of the letters) she had married, against the wish of her relations, an American of very suspicious character; in fact, he was generally believed to have been a pirate. She herself was the daughter of very respectable tradespeople, and had served in the capacity of a nursery governess before her marriage. She had a brother, a widower, who was considered wealthy, and who had one child of about six years old. A month after the marriage, the body of this brother was found in the Thames, near London Bridge; there seemed some marks of violence about his throat, but they were not deemed sufficient to warrant the inquest in any other verdict than that of "found drowned."

The American and his wife took charge of the little boy, the deceased brother having by his will left his sister the guardianship of his only child—and in the event of the child's death, the sister inherited. The

child died about six months afterward—it was supposed to have been neglected and ill-treated. The neighbors deposed to having heard it shriek at night. The surgeon who had examined it after death said that it was emaciated as if from want of nourishment, and the body was covered with livid bruises. It seemed that one winter night the child had sought to escape—crept out into the back-yard—tried to scale the wall—fallen back exhausted, and had been found at morning on the stones in a dying state. But though there was some evidence of cruelty, there was none of murder; and the aunt and her husband had sought to palliate cruelty by alleging the exceeding stubbornness and perversity of the child, who was declared to be half-witted. Be that as it may, at the orphan's death the aunt inherited her brother's fortune. Before the first wedded year was out, the American quitted England abruptly, and never returned to it. He obtained a cruising vessel, which was lost in the Atlantic two years afterward. The widow was left in affluence; but reverses of various kinds had befallen her; a bank broke—an investment failed—she went into a small business and became insolvent—then she entered into service, sinking lower and lower, from housekeeper down to maid-of-all-work—never long retaining a place, though nothing decided against her character was ever alleged. She was considered sober, honest, and peculiarly quiet in her ways; still nothing prospered with her. And so she had dropped into the

workhouse, from which Mr. J—— had taken her, to be placed in charge of the very house which she had rented as mistress in the first year of her wedded life.

Mr. J—— added that he had passed an hour alone in the unfurnished room which I had urged him to destroy, and that his impressions of dread while there were so great, though he had neither heard nor seen anything, that he was eager to have the walls bared and the floors removed as I had suggested. He had engaged persons for the work, and would commence any day I would name.

The day was accordingly fixed. I repaired to the haunted house—we went into the blind dreary room, took up the skirting, and then the floors. Under the rafters, covered with rubbish, was found a trap-door, quite large enough to admit a man. It was closely nailed down, with clamps and rivets of iron. On removing these we descended into a room below, the existence of which had never been suspected. In this room there had been a window and a flue, but they had been bricked over, evidently for many years. By the help of candles we examined this place; it still retained some moldering furniture—three chairs, an oak settle, a table—all of the fashion of about eighty years ago. There was a chest of drawers against the wall, in which we found, half-rotted away, old-fashioned articles of a man's dress, such as might have been worn eighty or a hundred years ago by a gentleman of some rank—costly steel buttons and buckles, like those yet

worn in court-dresses, a handsome court sword—in a waistcoat which had once been rich with gold lace, but which was now blackened and foul with damp, we found five guineas, a few silver coins, and an ivory ticket, probably for some place of entertainment long since passed away. But our main discovery was in a kind of iron safe fixed to the wall, the lock of which it cost us much trouble to get picked.

In this safe were three shelves, and two small drawers. Ranged on the shelves were several small bottles of crystal, hermetically stoppered. They contained colorless volatile essences, of the nature of which I shall only say that they were not poisonous—phosphor and ammonia entered into some of them. There were also some very curious glass tubes, and a small pointed rod of iron, with a large lump of rock crystal, and another of amber—also a loadstone of great power.

In one of the drawers we found a miniature portrait set in gold, and retaining the freshness of its colors most remarkably, considering the length of time it had probably been there. The portrait was that of a man who might be somewhat advanced in middle life, perhaps forty-seven or forty-eight.

It was a remarkable face—a most impressive face. If you could fancy some mighty serpent transformed into a man, preserving in the human lineaments the old serpent type, you would have a better idea of that countenance than long descriptions can convey; the width and flatness of frontal—the tapering elegance

of contour disguising the strength of the deadly jaw—the long, large, terrible eye, glittering and green as the emerald—and withal a certain ruthless calm, as if from the consciousness of an immense power.

Mechanically I turned round the miniature to examine the back of it, and on the back was engraved a pentacle; in the middle of the pentacle a ladder, and the third step of the ladder was formed by the date 1765. Examining still more minutely, I detected a spring; this, on being pressed, opened the back of the miniature as a lid. Withinside the lid was engraved, "Marianna to thee—Be faithful in life and in death to ——." Here follows a name that I will not mention, but it was not unfamiliar to me. I had heard it spoken of by old men in my childhood as the name borne by a dazzling charlatan who had made a great sensation in London for a year or so, and had fled the country on the charge of a double murder within his own house—that of his mistress and his rival. I said nothing of this to Mr. J——, to whom reluctantly I resigned the miniature.

We had found no difficulty in opening the first drawer within the iron safe; we found great difficulty in opening the second: it was not locked, but it resisted all efforts, till we inserted in the chinks the edge of a chisel. When we had thus drawn it forth, we found a very singular apparatus in the nicest order. Upon a small thin book, or rather tablet, was placed a saucer of crystal; this saucer was filled with a clear liquid—

on that liquid floated a kind of compass, with a needle shifting rapidly round; but instead of the usual points of the compass were seven strange characters, not very unlike those used by astrologers to denote the planets. A peculiar but not strong nor displeasing odor came from this drawer, which was lined with a wood that we afterward discovered to be hazel. Whatever the cause of this odor, it produced a material effect on the nerves. We all felt it, even the two workmen who were in the room—a creeping, tingling sensation from the tips of the fingers to the roots of the hair. Impatient to examine the tablet, I removed the saucer. As I did so the needle of the compass went round and round with exceeding swiftness, and I felt a shock that ran through my whole frame, so that I dropped the saucer on the floor. The liquid was spilled—the saucer was broken—the compass rolled to the end of the room—and at that instant the walls shook to and fro, as if a giant had swayed and rocked them.

The two workmen were so frightened that they ran up the ladder by which we had descended from the trap-door; but seeing that nothing more happened, they were easily induced to return.

Meanwhile I had opened the tablet; it was bound in plain red leather, with a silver clasp; it contained but one sheet of thick vellum, and on that sheet were inscribed, within a double pentacle, words in old monkish Latin, which are literally to be translated thus: "On all that it can reach within these walls—sentient

or inanimate, living or dead—as moves the needle, so work my will! Accursed be the house, and restless be the dwellers therein."

We found no more. Mr. J—— burned the tablet and its anathema. He razed to the foundations the part of the building containing the secret room with the chamber over it. He had then the courage to inhabit the house himself for a month, and a quieter, better-conditioned house could not be found in all London. Subsequently he let it to advantage, and his tenant has made no complaints.

P.L. 6-4-30

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